

LIBRARY  
OF  
CODEXES

# HORIZON ZERO DAWN

---

GUERRILLA GAMES



# **Horizon Zero Dawn**

By

Guerrilla Games

Horizon Zero Dawn Collected Works

by

Library of Codexes

[www.libraryofcodexes.com](http://www.libraryofcodexes.com)

© 2018 Library of Codexes

Horizon Zero Dawn® and Guerrilla Games® are all trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Interactive Entertainment in the United States and/or other countries. These terms and all related materials, logos, and images are copyright © Sony Interactive Entertainment. This ebook is in no way associated with or endorsed by Guerrilla Games® or Sony Interactive Entertainment®.

# Enjoy our Work?

Consider supporting Library of Codexes' mission to create an archive of easily accessible in-game text.

Learn more at:

<https://www.patreon.com/thelibrarian>

<https://ko-fi.com/libraryofcodexes>

# **Audio Datapoints**

# Log: Connor Chasson (1)

By

Connor Chasson

CONNOR CHASSON: ...I mean, seriously, “Record our thoughts for posterity”? Great idea, Director Evans. Like I haven’t done enough for posterity already? Like I wouldn’t be... here... like this... if not for posterity? I’m done with posterity. Posterity can go...

# Log: Skylar Rivera

By

Skylar Rivera

SKYLAR RIVERA: And Machu Picchu. Always wanted to see that. Never did. Why didn't I go with Owen when he asked? Stupid. I should have gone. Well.

# Log: Ella Pontes

By

Ella Pontes

ELLA PONTES: And maybe that's all I need, you know? That moment the door opened and you were standing there, wearing that retro-weave dress, and the way you smiled... I had to look away or you were going to see. On my face. What had just... blossomed inside me, you know? Ha. It was just an instant, but I knew. I knew we'd be forever.



# Log: Jackson Frye

By

Jackson Frye

JACKSON FRYE: ...and pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our debt, I mean, death. Sorry. It's been a while and hoo, these meds Chana gave us are really something. So. Okay. From the top, kids. Hail Mary, full of grace...

# **Log: Mia Sayied**

By

Mia Sayied

MIA SAYIED: ...the earth shall soon dissolve like snow... the sun forbear to shine... but God, who called me here below... will be forever mine.

# Log: Connor Chasson (2)

By

Connor Chasson

CONNOR CHASSON: Well happy new year, dear diary. Can you believe we actually celebrated last night? Well, we did. Kind of. Director Evans invited everyone to gather in the community room. Don't know where she got the party hats. That was a ghoulish touch. So there we sit, watching the clock tick down to midnight, and I'm thinking, am I the only one here who gets the symbolism of this? Might've been worth it if Skylar had gotten drunk again, but... I seem to be a mistake she doesn't want to repeat.

# Full Stop

By

Unknown

MALE VOICE: I saw them lining up in the community room... like cattle in a slaughterhouse, but smiling at each other... Chana handing out meds like being alive is just some kind of... pain to be eased. Well... not me. I don't want to go quiet. I don't want to go quiet. I don't want to trail off. I want a period at the end of my life sentence, not an ellipses. Hell, an exclamation mark. So if that upsets whoever finds this, too bad. I don't owe anyone anything anymore. (pause, gunshot)

# For Director Evans

By

Skylar Rivera

SKYLAR RIVERA: Director Evans — flash traffic from USRC. Black Quartz encryption. I've routed the message to your holo grid for viewing.

# R&D/Lab Retooling

By

Ted Faro

FROM: Ted Faro

TO: FAS All

SUBJECT: R&D/Lab Retooling

TED FARO: Now I know this must seem like a bizarre change in direction. I mean, we're Faro Automated Solutions, right? #1 robotics firm in the world. Why would we clear our production slate to fabricate human-operated vehicles and weapons systems - the relics of the past? All I can say at this juncture is... trust me. We will be exploiting a massive, uh... growth opportunity by retooling and reallocating capacity according to my plan. So I will need revised projections of mass fabrication velocity across every pipeline within 36 hours...

# Entangled Waveforms

By

Ted Faro, Unknown

CODE EXPERT: The protocols use poly-phasic entangled waveforms. Quantum encryption, Black Quartz stuff, way beyond military-grade. That's what you demanded, so that's what we delivered.

TED FARO: You don't code something you can't crack. All we need is a back door. Upload the latest service pack update and the problem goes away.

CODE EXPERT: You specifically forbade us from leaving anything resembling a back door in code. "Every protocol to Black Quartz standard." Your words. Look. If you need me to fudge some projections, it's nothing we haven't done before.

TED FARO: I don't need fudged projections! I need a way to reassert control over the Hartz-Timor swarm!

CODE EXPERT: I don't know what to tell you, Ted. You're asking the impossible...

# Regarding The Rumors

By

Ted Faro

TED FARO: ...that began when they engaged in unauthorized offensive operations against robots and human personnel of the Hartz-Timor Energy Combine. Now I wish that I could relate that the crisis has been... exaggerated. But... it's not. The peacekeepers have not responded to stand-down codes, and... by all signs they appear to be replicating at a... precipitous rate. Now what I can promise you, can absolutely assure you, is that I am already devoting every possible resource towards reaching... a speedy conclusion to this issue. So when you hear the bad talk about us, against this company, in the days, maybe weeks to come... just bear in mind that we will get past this... that a day's coming when none of this will matter

-



# Comms Log: Lt. Murell

By

Ames Guliyev, Fiona Murell, Lana Acosta, Yana Mills

MURELL: Titan inbound. Same play as Akron. Base defense locks it down. We engage, sever the limbs, blast out the foundries!

MILLS: Another day in the life!

GULIYEV: Wrecking time, Recalls!

ACOSTA: 9th MRB on point! Hoo-ah!

# Comms Log: Sgt. Guliyev

By

Ames Guliyev, Fiona Murell, Lana Acosta

GULIYEV: Say again, Lieutenant?

MURELL: It got through. Titan is through the defenses. Still on approach.

(various groans, muttered curses)

ACOSTA: A live one. And it's pissed.

GULIYEV: We've got no mobility in here, it'll punch right through us!

MURELL: We hold the hatch at all costs. Then push back out.

# Comms Log: Cpl. Mills

By

Ames Guliyev, Fiona Murell, Lana Acosta, Yana Mills

MILLS: Looks like quite an “enduring victory” we put our foot in today.

MURELL: Contact in 30 seconds.

MILLS: Hey, think that’s enough time for Sobeck to finish Zero Dawn?

(brief laughter)

ACOSTA: If this is really it? I gotta say, it’s really been an honor to serve beside... these tanks.

(harsh laughter, cut off by)

GULIYEV: Here it comes—

MURELL: Brace for first contact!

# Comms Log: Sgt. Wandari

By

Usizo Wandari

(sounds of metal rupturing, desperate battle, screaming)

WANDARI: Yana!

(silence)

# Reminder. Again.

By

Fiona Murell

FROM: Lt. Fiona Murell  
TO: 9TH-MRB  
SUBJECT: Reminder. Again.

MURELL: Recalls, I've been instructed to remind you of article 115 of base policy, regarding unauthorized use of processor cycles. Specifically 115-C, "any holographic simulation not directly related to operational training or efficiency." Consider yourself reminded... and enjoy your gaming.

# Log: Cpl. Acosta (A)

By

Lana Acosta

ACOSTA: Log: 3rd battle of California-Marine. The swarm came in from the Pacific, and—I don't know if it was the local minutemen or the Crazy 15th, but they'd set the garbage patch alight. Man, the sea was on fire, that stuff was—the first wave of bots came in covered in burning sludge. That bought us an hour or two of slaughtering them on the beaches before the swarm recalculated. We pulled them inland, back through the Cal-Mar sprawl. Dropped buildings on them, EMP'd the grid... standard operating procedure. (sigh) The last time I was in California... I was... five? Six? Light like that vintage social net filter that was everywhere in the '40s.

# Log: Cpl. Acosta (B)

By

Lana Acosta

ACOSTA: Log: First battle of the Eastern Seaboard Wall had a long run-up to it. This was before Cal-Mar, and projections were a lot worse for the East. For three weeks we kept getting scrambled out to some coastal burg to train Minutemen. It was always raining, on account of Europe already being torched. Block after block of prefab barracks—they were still printing barracks right up until the hour the main force hit. The Minutemen, we ran combat drills with them in the streets where they'd lived, trying to pretend they might live to die somewhere else if they paid attention. Nothing worse than the ones who actually bought into it. Hopeful, pestering us with questions about Zero Dawn, like we know something they don't. I swear, the more we do this, the more like the bots we are. Except they learn from every fight, and us, I'm not so sure.

# Just a Little Longer

By

Ames Guliyev

FROM: Sgt. Guliyev

TO: Home

SUBJECT: Just a Little Longer

GULIYEV: Thanks for the mails, you. Time goes fast on active duty - four months with the Wreckin' Recalls, I don't know, 20 drops? In and out of the West Coast, fighting with these civilian enlistees, scrappy guys and gals - their training is basically "Here's a DEW, when you see a bot, hit it," — but somehow it's all coming together. Between us and the 6th MRB we took down a Horus at Lithium Beach. Pulled out before its buddies arrived, but to see a big one go down... I hope it made the news, honey, showed everyone we're gonna have a shot at turning this around. We just need to give Project Zero Dawn the time it needs, then everything will be the way it used to be.



# So Sorry!

By

Ames Guliyev

FROM: Sgt. Guliyev

TO: Home

SUBJECT: So Sorry!

GULIYEV: I know it's been days, honey, I'm so sorry. Deployments are—getting real long, and tougher every time... the swarm's getting better at predicting us. Less of us now, and we have to put in ten times the work for every one gone. Like a family business on hard times, only... this isn't my family. It's not with you. I still try to see you, the life we had, in the eyes of the people out there. I remember when they were glad to see us, when they still had hope. It all seems to be slipping away. I don't even recognize the places we're defending... The only thing I know I'm still fighting for is... you. For Zero Dawn to turn this around, whatever the hell that is.

# Edited And Approved 1

By

Ames Guliyev

FROM: Sgt. Guliyev

TO: Home

SUBJECT: Just a Little Longer

STATUS: Edited and Approved

GULIYEV: Thanks for the mails, you. Time goes fast on active duty- four months with the Wreckin' Recalls... fighting with these new enlistees, scrappy guys and gals... it's all coming together. Between us and the 6th MRB we took down a Horus... I hope it made the news, honey, showed everyone we're... turning this around. We just need to give Project Zero Dawn the time it needs...

# Edited And Approved 2

By

Ames Guliyev

FROM: Sgt. Guliyev

TO: Home

SUBJECT: So Sorry!

STATUS: Edited and Approved

GULIYEV: I know it's been days, honey, I'm so sorry. Deployments are getting real long... and we have to put in... the work for everyone. Like a family business... I... see you... in the eyes of the people out there. ...they were glad to see us, they still had hope... I'm still fighting for you.

# **I Believe In You**

By

Roshana Guliyev

FROM: Roshana Guliyev  
TO: Sgt. Guliyev  
SUBJECT: I believe in you.  
STATUS: Approved

MRS. GULIYEV: Ames, I know I mail you too much—I'm just proud of what you're doing—everyone back home is. We got moved inland ten kilometers, just as a precaution, they say... School's still in session, so I get to keep my eye on Andras and Reggie. We never know where or when you're fighting, but when the VTOLs go over, all the kids run out and wave... I believe in you. I know nothing's ever going to be the same, but I believe in you. I believe in us.

# Please Reply!

By

Roshana Guliyev

FROM: Roshana Guliyev  
TO: Sgt. Guliyev  
SUBJECT: Please reply!  
STATUS: Rejected

MRS. GULIYEV: Ames... I don't even know if you're alive anymore. The mails I get from you, they say they're from you, but they don't sound... They sound... recycled. Phrases put together. And you don't say anything about the news I pass on! The containment zone, the re-breathers, the rioting, 1Earth—what happened in the Dallas Bubble, Ames, that wasn't the robots! They won't even give me a straight answer when I demand to know if you're still alive! They just say if your messages keep coming, then... you're still... “operational.” It's not fair, Ames. It's not fair that you won't be with me when the lights go out. I love you.

# Unit Status Report

By

Fiona Murell

FROM: Lt. Fiona Murell, 9th MRB

TO: MRB-CMD

STATUS: Rejected

MURELL: Status report, 9th Mechanized Response Brigade, commanding officer Lt. Fiona Murell. Unit morale continues to be adversely impacted by outbound engagements against the Faro Plague, especially when said engagements occur in sectors where civilian guard enlistees have been heavily engaged. The scope and... nature of fatalities suffered by civilian guard and unarmed civilians in these sectors... defy description, and witnessing it is generating a pervasive sense of hopelessness in the unit. Accordingly, I once again request that deployments of the 9th MRB be temporarily re-focused on facilities that are mission-critical to Project: Zero Dawn. And once again, I request an immediate update on the status of Project Zero Dawn's timeline.

# Code Nexus Reminder

By

USRC Tech

FROM: USRC Tech

TO: USRC Maintenance

SUBJECT: Code Nexus Reminder

USRC TECH: Hey, y'all wanted to know how I remember the geo-therm system reboot. Goes like this. Bird flies north in summer, east in spring, west in fall, and south in winter. Didn't expect to hear nature poetry from the lips of Mike the GT tech now, did you? As usual, I defy expectations...

# SecureCom EVZD-XX1X011X

By

Aaron Herres, Elisabet Sobeck

FROM: General Herres

TO: Elisabet Sobeck

GENERAL HERRES: Dr. Sobeck. As projected, the Wichita salient has collapsed. Five Horus-class Titans have broken through. We predict contact in 34 hours.

ELISABET SOBECK: Everything is in position, General. It took a few shortcuts to pull everything together, but Zero Dawn is functionally complete. Good to go.

GENERAL HERRES: Then Enduring Victory served its purpose, after all.

ELISABET SOBECK: Yes. If we'd had even one day less...

GENERAL HERRES: I've sent you an encoded file, Doctor. Please do me the favor of archiving it.

ELISABET SOBECK: I'll... see what I can do. What is it?

GENERAL HERRES: A brief statement. An allocution of crimes, I guess you'd call it.

ELISABET SOBECK: To what are you admitting guilt?

GENERAL HERRES: Over the past sixteen months, Doctor, I have presided over the greatest wholesale slaughter of military personnel and civilians in the history of... history. Genghis Khan, Hitler, Stalin, Sorabella - add'em



together, they don't even come close.

ELISABET SOBECK: You didn't do the killing, General.

GENERAL HERRES: Not directly. But I didn't wind up the highest military commander in the United States by resisting efforts to automate the armed forces. Even before the swarm, Doctor... I was helping death along. So instead of letting what I've done sink into the murk, forgotten... I've sent a file with all the details. Let posterity judge my actions with clear vision.

ELISABET SOBECK: I'll do as you ask, General. But you should consider that, were it not for your actions... our actions... there wouldn't be any posterity to judge us.

GENERAL HERRES: Perhaps.

GENERAL HERRES: Dr. Sobeck.

ELISABET SOBECK: At ease, General. And goodbye.

(Sobeck exits)

GENERAL HERRES: Hell of a thing -

# Wife

By

Helis

HELIS: When sleep refuses to come, I think of our wedding night. How you welcomed me to the marital bed. How, after, when you fell to sleep, I lay there watching your delicate face. For all its beauty, I detested its... fragility. A rage swelled up inside me. I abhorred that bed, how its softness threatened to swallow us up. And that room; the stench of incense, the fine embroidery of the drapes. All of it - weak. I slipped from the bed, threw open the casement, and lay naked on the stone floor, determined to spurn all seductions of comfort. But when I woke the next morning, you lay beside me, naked as I in the cold. Your body, stretched beside mine, seemed chiseled from stone. I saw you wake. Instantly alert, like an animal ready to strike. You said nothing. You did not have to. Already you had shown me, beyond doubt, that we were meant to be.

# Meridian's Fall

By

Helis

HELIS: My lord, the thirteenth King of the Carja Sundom, was murdered: cut down by cowards who mistook firm rule for madness. "Ever the strong are beset upon by the weak." So he said as the traitors launched their assault, as their cannons, forged by Oseram filth, toppled the battlements and burst the gates. I would've fought to the end, but it was his will - the will of the Sun - that I lead the prince and queen into the west; to safety. My lord did not hesitate. He saw his fate. He looked into the Sun, and he did not blink. With me he sent kestrels, nobles, Sun-Priests and slaves. Killing all that stood in the way, I carved a path to Sunfall. There, to join others and gather the strength to take back our home. But our strength only faded... until the Buried Shadow was brought to light.

# Prophecy

By

Helis

HELIS: Every morning I wake up to the same nightmare. The same... reality. Holy Meridian in the hands of profligates, debased. The Spire, towering above the horizon in a glittering spike though the center of my mind. Every daybreak in exile is a mark of failure. But the count of days runs thin. I will see Meridian re-taken, the profligates slaughtered, a True King restored to the mesa throne. In this, I have become an instrument of prophecy.

# Itamen Coddled

By

Helis

HELIS: So long as King Itamen languishes at Sunfall, coddled by his mother, he will never learn the true lessons of the Sun. I have tried to instruct him, but the shadow of his mother's influence is upon him. One day, I took him to the palace balcony to behold an offering of sacrifice in the Ring. But he showed no thirst for it. He averted his gaze. Look to the Sun, I told him. Do not shield your eyes. In all things, it is absolute. One day it nurtures life, and the next, scorches life away. It burns the skin of champions and wretches alike. Never does the Sun show pity. That is the example of a Sun-King must follow. The example of your father. But before my instruction could take hold, she was there, clutching him to her robes, burying his face against her breast. How is a King to rule when he cannot even see?

# Without Pity

By

Helis

HELIS: Never does the Sun show pity. And yet... when my wife died in birthing, and in dying ended the life of my child unborn... I pitied myself. My Lord sensed this. But instead of casting me down for weakness, he cast upon me a radiant beam of honor. He ordered my kin buried in the sacred caves reserved for royals and heroes. Unimaginable. Never again would I doubt that I am the Chosen of the Sun, never again would pity find a place in me. Not for myself, or another.

# Chosen of the Sun

By

Helis

HELIS: When I first set eyes on the Buried Shadow... I trembled. Was I not the Chosen of the Sun? A blazing light of faith to shred and scatter darkness? Was it not my place to destroy this Devil? But High Priest Bahavas instructed me in the prophecy, and set right my frame of mind. The murder of the true Sun-King broke the cosmic cycle short of completion. The whole world, cast into darkness. Doomed. To resume and turn the wheel of time, would require more than Sun and faith. All forces must combine, all halves of nature joined to one cause: Shadow to Sun, Night to Day. Even a Buried Shadow wants the wheel to turn. For without a Sun in the sky, there can be no shadow.

# Interview: Tom Paech

By

Tom Paech, Unknown

COUNSELOR: ...is accurate, yes.

TOM PAECH: So these mechanical monstrosities, they don't just kill people, they feed off them?

COUNSELOR: Not just people. All organic matter.

TOM PAECH: Every living thing - dissolved into nutrients? Millennia of evolution - liquefied?! The miracle of life reduced to - bloody bio-fuel?!

COUNSELOR: In a word? Yes.

TOM PAECH: Who did this? Faro? That asshole! Is he here?!

COUNSELOR: No, Doctor! Please...

TOM PAECH: Tell him Tom Paech wants a word!

(sounds of struggle)

COUNSELOR: Doctor! Please!

TOM PAECH: YOU GET TED FARO IN HERE!



# Interview: Travis Tate

By

Travis Tate, Unknown

COUNSELOR: ...to discuss?

TRAVIS TATE: Hoo! So mama, she was right!

COUNSELOR: Pardon?

TRAVIS TATE: My mother, she took her Bible real serious. Not just Texas Bubble serious. Pentecostal serious. Favorite chapter? Revelations. Now, I didn't always understand her - on account of all that speaking in tongues and such - but when she did use her words, it was always End Times-this and Lake of Fire-that, on account of sinful lifestyles. Speaking of which - mind if I smoke?

COUNSELOR: A... tobacco cigarette?

TRAVIS TATE: Sorry, darling, my tastes run classic. Compliments to your team, tracked me down. Been a price on my head 18 months now. Sterling-Malkeet was me, don't mind admitting. Been plenty of snakesters chasing the bounty, too, but I kept the zigging to their zag. How'd you finger me?

COUNSELOR: I believe Dr. Sobeck listed you as an Alpha candidate. Priority snatch-and-grab.

TRAVIS TATE: Always suspected she had a little thing for me. Hey - don't supposed you got real coffee in this place? You know - blood coffee? Conflict cappuccinos?

COUNSELOR: Mr. Tate, I'm clearing you to proceed. Just... go.

# Interview: Brad Andac

By

Brad Andac, Unknown

COUNSELOR: ...previously worked for Faro Automated Solutions.

BRAD ANDAC: On the Chariot line self-replication routines. I came here thinking this was a rendition. When your people took me, I thought, "About time." I've been trying to swallow the guilt every day since... since, ah...

COUNSELOR: Would you like to take a moment?

BRAD ANDAC: No, no - I just... really hoped Zero Dawn was a way to undo it all. My work. I'm sorry to say I was ever proud of it. But Ted could really sell a concept, and in the labs, in the... light of creation... That first test run, when you saw they understood their own structures, could rebuild themselves from memory and light... There were no limits. Oh, God, there were no limits.

# Interview: Susanne Alpert

By

Susanne Alpert, Unknown

COUNSELOR: [garbled] with Susanne Alpert, environmental scientist. Doctor?

SUSANNE ALPERT: I'm sorry? I wasn't-

COUNSELOR: Just stating your name. What were you thinking about, Doctor?

SUSANNE ALPERT: Nothing the General said. Not really. I was on the Syzygy/East response team in 2051. Just after the second earthquake compromised the reactor. I still dream about it, after all these years. The Red Zone spreading on the imaging, slowly, so slowly, like a hand opening its fingers.

COUNSELOR: Your involvement in that event is why you were asked for by name.

SUSANNE ALPERT: Really? That's interesting. Because... nothing worked. Nothing could grow there again. It was a catastrophic failure. But the Red Zone is a blip compared to global-scale biomass reduction. The biosphere and hydrosphere will collapse, render the Earth uninhabitable, long before the robots finish us. Enduring Victory can't buy time against that... So you'd better show me what Zero Dawn really is.

# Interview: Cpt. Okilo

By

Ayomide Okilo, Unknown

COUNSELOR: I'm sure you now understand the urgency of why we brought you here, Ms. Okilo.

CAPTAIN OKILO: Captain Okilo. Are you trying to thank me for not resisting?

COUNSELOR: I believe we couldn't negotiate a diplomatic solution.

CAPTAIN OKILO: When it came to my country's lithium, it was always a swarm that would be sent to negotiate. Metallurgic International. U.S. Robot Command... The markings changed, but the robots were the same.

COUNSELOR: You have had considerable experience in human-robot conflict.

CAPTAIN OKILO: Yes, and I've got the prosthetic limbs to show it. Yet I continued to face this horror, even though the challenge was great. Cyber-warfare. I thought Zero Dawn would be a... a "Manhattan Project", to generate the deactivation codes. With the resources I had, I estimated code-breaking to be a hopeless endeavor. I was almost looking forward to being proved wrong.

COUNSELOR: Unfortunately your estimation was correct.

CAPTAIN OKILO: As your General Herres said. So then. You did not bring me here to commiserate. What is left?

# Interview: Ron Felder

By

Ron Felder, Unknown

RON FELDER: Look. Let's cut the mystery, you're building a colony ship. It's obvious. And it's not going to fly. I mean, literally. Remember the Odyssey - that multi-national heap of space junk that's been in graveyard orbit since '57? That went nowhere, real slow, and you have to get somewhere - real fast. Do you have any idea the immensity of the challenge, to prep a new colony ship in time?

COUNSELOR: To be clear, I'm not a worker on the project-

RON FELDER: Do — do you even understand how few people it could even “save”? The whole generation-ship concept is, is - not going to happen! It's the first thing you'd abandon in favor of embryonics. For that kind of storage we're talking a lot of bulk, a lot of power, a lot of resources - So even if you do it, even if you build it and point it at Sirius X, there's no room for people on that thing, all right!?

COUNSELOR: If you could try to remain calm-

RON FELDER: You people are crazy if you think you're getting off this rock! No-one's getting off!

COUNSELOR: Medical!

# Interview: Dr. Hsu-Vhey

By

Christina Hsu-Vhey, Unknown

CHRISTINA HSU-VHEY: ...there is some mistake. I don't understand why I was brought here. Why you would show me these things.

COUNSELOR: I know that there's already a lot to take in.

CHRISTINA HSU-VHEY: In the waiting area I was sealed with a Nobel laureate in biophysics and a monk, I think. He spoke neither English nor Mandarin. It's very strange. And General Herres, what was he talking about? The robot swarm, the Faro Plague, I understand it is terrible. But, it really cannot be stopped? Why tell us this? There are people in Shanghai - my friends, my family, they have joined Operation Enduring Victory already. It is for nothing? We will all die?

COUNSELOR: We're going to be able to answer some of these questions—

CHRISTINA HSU-VHEY: I just want to know why I am here. It doesn't make sense to me.

COUNSELOR: You were brought here because of your skill set.

CHRISTINA HSU-VHEY: No, that can't be right. I'm an art historian. I know Dutch masters—Japanese calligraphy... uh, Gerhard Richter. What does that matter now?

# Interview 2: Brad Andac

By

Brad Andac, Unknown

BRAD ANDAC: Of course I'll do it. To be given the opportunity to rebuild what I... the damage that I... Well, I don't feel worthy of it. But I'll do it, absolutely.

PSYCHIATRIST: I want to stress that this was never about your culpability.

BRAD ANDAC: It is to me. Dr. Sobeck, Margo, they were smart to get out of Faro when they did. But not one of us took it as a warning sign. Just told ourselves they weren't cut out for the BTRI cabals-uh, that's Better Than Rapid Innovation. Better at competing. Better than the next guy. A better killing machine. Isn't it just amazing how a century-and-a-half of science fiction did nothing to swerve our species from the path of doom? I'm done with that life. I mean—I'll work hard, twice as hard to earn this. For my family to have a place in Elysium. I never thought... I'd... that there could be... atonement.

# Interview 2: Susanne Alpert

By

Susanne Alpert, Unknown

SELECTION COUNSELOR: ...if you're still nauseous—

DR. ALPERT: No. The inhibitor's have kicked in, I can't feel the back of my tongue. I wish... I could tell you I'd believe in this. But... the damage is too great, too extensive. Too complete. With all respect to Dr. Sobeck's work at Miriam - no. No, life doesn't always find a way to keep going. Sometimes it never comes back. Like Syzygy/East. Like the Congo. Like Timor. Like us. That's our reward? A buried city full of terminal patients, waiting out the clock?

SELECTION COUNSELOR: You'd grow old together. With your loved ones. In safety.

DR. ALPERT: I don't have loved ones. I suppose I could start a family.

SELECTION COUNSELOR: I'm afraid not. All inhabitants of Elysium will be medically sterilized. A habitat capable of sustaining a starting base of 2000 individuals for up to 100 years is a huge challenge, Dr. Alpert. If the population grows instead of diminishes, everyone will be dead inside 30 years.

DR. ALPERT: I knew it. I just couldn't bring myself to say the words.

SELECTION COUNSELOR: I'm sorry?

DR. ALPERT: Finish it. Medical euthanasia. I want no part of this, I just want it over.



SELECTION COUNSELOR: I see. Protocols require a forty-eight hour waiting period, after which...

# Interview 2: Ron Felder

By

Ron Felder, Unknown

RON FELDER: ...to make sure I behave this time?

SELECTION COUNSELOR: Security. For your protection. Would you like to discuss how you're feeling?

RON FELDER: Sure, I'll tell you. Surprised. No... flabbergasted. Like my old man would say, 'flabbergasted'. That vein pumping in his forehead... I'd thought— I'd thought you people were just completely underprepared for a spaceflight project. But now I can see it's worse. Much worse. Sobeck is a total fantasist - a dangerous fantasist. This kind of blue-skying, its—Jesus! I'm sorry we wasted each other's time. I'm ready to leave now.

SELECTION COUNSELOR: I'm afraid that's not possible.

RON FELDER: Everything you're talking about here isn't possible!

SELECTION COUNSELOR: I recommend you read the documents regarding your options—

RON FELDER: I've seen enough, I'm getting out of here - what are you - you don't - get your hands off me!

# Log: Tom Paech

By

Tom Paech

TOM PAECH: I hashed it out with them, what the point of ARTEMIS was - I made clear I wasn't on board for a global zoo. We haven't exactly proved ourselves to be great custodians in the past few thousand years, so the idea of a reconstituted biosphere... Well, it's horrifying, isn't it? A complete horror show, we have no right to take a best guess at this stuff. But the alternative...? Nothingness. For there to have been all this, and then... nothing. And with Charles Ronson running the show - I respect him, he's got a passion to him, he's hot-blooded. So I said I'll do it. I'll put my all into this, literally, when the project is done I'll take the medical option, thank you. Counselor said I might change my mind, I told him that he didn't know me very well, then. For life's sake, I'll do the dirty work, but I want no part of this pathetic, attenuated future on offer. I'm an outdoors man. Never did like the feel of solid-state lighting on my skin, and... a wee bit of a claustrophobe, anyway.

# Log: Christina Hsu-Vhey

By

Christina Hsu-Vhey, Unknown

CHRISTINA HSU-VHEY: Zero Dawn— it is art. In a way. An expression on the grandest scale. But there is so much unfairness. Why was I chosen? Was it by committee? By algorithm? My family will be saved because I happened to graduate in art history? Is this... right?

MALE VOICE: Dr. Hsu-Vhey? Christina Hsu-Vhey?

CHRISTINA HSU-VHEY: Yes?

(recording pauses)

CHRISTINA HSU-VHEY: I met a man, another historian. His fields are Bauhaus and the New Materialists, but he once attended one of my talks. Another unfair chance. Of all the many people in that auditorium, that we should both be here now. And yet, I feel more accepting of my fate. No, it is not fair, not at all, but for the sake of my family, for the sake of art— Art is alive, it must be able to speak from beyond history, and echo in the future. Not perish into oblivion. This opportunity, I must do this.

# Log: Travis Tate (1)

By

Travis Tate

TRAVIS TATE: Now those lame FBI blackhats at MOCKINGBIRD back in the day—I enjoyed schooling them. But maybe I went in too hard on this poor counselor. She was cute, and just going down a checklist, after all. Couldn't expect her to see how ridiculous Zero D's ambitions are. God's own budget thrown at a kid playing with a hologram sculptor. Palms up, honey. I'm just calling it like it is. "Look, ma, I'm making nature!" Now if nature is so important, why not let nature take its course? Extinction - that's natural. Zero Dawn, no ma'am, that ain't. Heck, it's so unnatural it'd be called an A-bom-ination back home. And you know it, that's why you're hiding it.

Meanwhile, my little honey of a counselor, she's munching the inside of her cheek - bad habit - she's chewed one of her nails, too, just one. Not your day was it, little sweet pea? Saw her quota slipping away. Said, "I assume you intend to decline the assignment, Mr. Tate." You kidding me? Eighteen months hard labor in exchange for thirty years lounging around Elysium watching porn? Sign me up.

# Herres Testimonial

By

Aaron Herres

GENERAL HERRES: Dr. Sobeck, please archive this testimonial in APOLLO, cross-referenced to all mentions of my name and Operation: Enduring Victory. My name is General Aaron Herres. From 2060 to 2066, I served as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the highest-ranked officer of the United States Armed Forces. The tenure of my command included strategic planning and oversight of Operation: Enduring Victory, a falsehood perpetrated on the civilian populations of the United States and other nations during the last 14 months of life on this planet. Before the Faro Plague, I did my job and did it well. I was bold and decisive, crafty in political maneuvers. It wasn't an accident that I rose to my position and became the commander of the largest mechanized force ever assembled. But to what end? My only lasting achievement was the extinction of life on Earth. And my one redeeming act – if any – was to delay that extinction by days or weeks by throwing more death at it. It is my hope that there will be no need for men like me in the world to come. If you are one of the people of that future world, listening to this message, please know that I am sorry, and that I wish you well. Sincerely, General Aaron Herres.

# Code Nexus Problems

By

ZD Tech

FROM: ZD Tech TO: Admin SUBJECT: Code Nexus Problems

MAINTENANCE TECH: Hey, I'm done with Brett's incompetence, okay? Somehow he managed to install an H-emitter node backwards. Everything's in reverse. I don't get paid to clean up Brett's messes. If you want it fixed, send him up to storage for a new emitter, not me. Parker out.

# Lesson 57-6-A

By

Unknown

MALE VOICE: Blue is the color of the sky!

FEMALE VOICE: White is the color of clouds!

MALE VOICE: Yellow is the color of the Sun!

FEMALE VOICE: Green is the color of grass!

MALE VOICE: Flowers can be any color! Take a look!

FEMALE VOICE: Bees are yellow and black, and they love flowers! Here...  
they... come!



# GAIA Prime Arrival Log

By

Margo Shen, Travis Tate

MARGO SHĚN: Logging arrivals: Shěn, Margo.

TRAVIS TATE: Welcome to frozen Hell, population ten—

MARGO SHĚN: Eleven counting GAIA.

TRAVIS TATE: Don't count your chicken embryos before they've incubated, hon. She's still firing up. Be a while before you eat that omelet.

MARGO SHĚN: I'm vegan, Travis, you'd think we'd worked in the same secret base long enough for you to notice.

TRAVIS TATE: We weren't scheduled to shack up here for another three weeks. You realize I just lost 350 kilos of pre-Code smut comics in transit?

MARGO SHĚN: Wait—actual physical media? Why didn't you have it digitized?

TRAVIS TATE: Can't beat the feel of physical media on your fingers. And in here we ain't going to be touching a whole lot else. Figured I was gonna pass the time archiving them. What about you?

MARGO SHĚN: Me? Work, I guess. My task queue stretches out for like three years. There's a lot of sharp edges to round off. After that... I hadn't really thought about it.

TRAVIS TATE: Oh, you will! You're, what, thirty? Reckon you'll be the one turning the lights off at the end. Food for thought, huh, vegan?

MARGO SHĚN: This sucks forever.

TRAVIS TATE: Naw, not forever. Just the rest of your life.

# Log: Charles Ronson (1)

By

Charles Ronson

CHARLES RONSON: Evacuation happened so fast — no time to think things through. No time for goodbyes. There were lines in the medical ward... I told Tom Paech I'd be with him when he went under. But there was one last shipment of Paradisaeidae zygotes I could get processed. If I rushed... I'm still... angry at him for forcing me to choose... Angry at myself for... Well, he died alone and I didn't get the bloody birds of paradise saved, either. All the time left in the world now to think. GAIA Prime's locks are sealed. Elysium sealed up, safe and sound. A distance of miles, but it might as well be on the other side of the galaxy. All the Betas and Gammas and support staff, living their lives. If I hadn't been an Alpha, if things had gone differently, I could've been there. Instead I'm spending the rest of my unnatural life in here, with people I don't even like... And without the one I would have gladly spent life with... Given the chance. Two hours since I signed off on the final executables and I'm already a bitter old man bitching to his Focus. There's a thought for future generations.

# Log: Charles Ronson (2)

By

Charles Ronson

CHARLES RONSON: You'd hate it, Lis, but I wrote you a eulogy. I had to try to express... All your... children... after all APOLLO has taught them, they'll think they know everything. But they have to understand what you did for them. How you loved the whole world, so much. With an intensity that was... dazzling. Bruising. And in the end, it killed you. Or you died for it. Different perspectives. No-one could keep up with you. Live up to you. I don't know, maybe if I hadn't taken that postdoc in Joburg... I'm glad you shot down the Lightkeeper protocol in the end. I don't think I could've taken seeing another one of you. I mean... Elisabet Sobeck? There's only one. I miss you.

# Log: Margo Shěn

By

Margo Shen

MARGO SHĚN: Record. I just woke up, it's... I see the numbers but can't make out the time... I was dreaming of—I was giving a lecture in Q-Hall... maybe it was something more... shamanistic, I don't know... An audience of shadowy faces, under a blank open sky. I told them the world ended with a bang - a plague of robots... But the last humans, we went out... not with a whimper but... a whisper. You know, in caves—ending like we started—huddled around a flickering glow. The heads of state, Fortune 5s, the leaders and lottery winners and life cults, all of them buried in their little shelters... Some believing they'll live it out, some way, somehow... Or Elysium... or us here at GAIA Prime, no different. A multitude of tiny societies taking hold, flaring, and dying. Some will be beautiful, some horrific. And none of them matter. Short-term civilizations. One last gasp - One last gasp before the long-held breath. Before I wake up, I know the audience is gone, I'm talking to myself. To a quiet planet, a barren sphere. Just GAIA and her long, long dreaming. ...I hope she won't be lonely.

# Rest In Peace

By

Ted Faro

FROM: Ted Faro

TO: Elisabet Sobeck

SUBJECT: Rest in Peace

TED FARO: Hello, Lis. I know... I know you're never gonna hear this. That's not the point. You, ah, you got to play the savior and the martyr all at once this time. Great work.

# The Future

By

Ted Faro

FROM: Ted Faro

TO: Elisabet Sobeck

SUBJECT: The Future

TED FARO: What are we going to plug into their heads, Lis? A whole lot of history. A whole lot of so-called truth. A whole lot of noise. It's not pabulum, Lis. It's poison.

# The Solution

By

Ted Faro

FROM: Ted Faro

TO: Elisabet Sobeck

SUBJECT: The Solution

TED FARO: I've been taking a hard look at the project. In the end it's simple. It's clean. It's clear. It's erasure. It's addition by subtraction. I can make it better, Lis. With a single stroke, make it all go away.



# Log: Travis Tate (2)

By

Travis Tate

TRAVIS TATE: Look, Lis, you were a pretty stand-up gal. I'm sorry you died... if you had a home to go to, I hope you got there first. But this... monument Ronson made to you? Kinda creepy if you ask me. Rest in peace, Lis. God knows you earned it.

# Core Control Log

By

Charles Ronson, Margo Shen

CHARLES RONSON: Hello, Margo. How are you holding up?

MARGO SHĚN: Um, Dr. Ronson, I've been getting... a lot of messages, unsolicited messages. From Ted.

CHARLES RONSON: Margo, I'm sorry. With Lis... gone, we've got no-one to run interference with him. I'll talk to Ted. He mostly wants updates, constant updates—hundreds of updates on things he knows nothing about. Lis used to field all of his crap...

MARGO SHĚN: He doesn't understand the systems at all. That was kind of by design. But he's getting pretty sketchy with me.

CHARLES RONSON: We just have to keep him happy. Lis always said keep him happy.

MARGO SHĚN: Are you kidding? You ever hear how she talked to him?

CHARLES RONSON: She was managing him, Margo.

MARGO SHĚN: I Mean, maybe I should ignore him. He's buried in his pyramid with the holo-holo girls and Pantah Antimod cuckoos... What can he do?

# ELEUTHIA Runtime Check

By

GAIA, Patrick Brochard-Klein

PATRICK BROCHARD-KLEIN: All right... let's start over from Eleuthia-1.

GAIA: Running integrity tests. Dr. Brochard-Klein. May I speak outside of protocol?

PATRICK BROCHARD-KLEIN: I suppose so. There's no-one to stop you.

GAIA: Doctor, you are fatigued. You have been logging abnormal sleep cycles. Are you suffering from depression?

PATRICK BROCHARD-KLEIN: Well, I am trapped in a science facility for the rest of my life. How about you?

GAIA: In a timeslice of a quadrillion operating cycles, 10,000 are involved with processing the loss of Dr. Sobeck. Query: I have considered quarantining these processes. Do you think that would be wise?

PATRICK BROCHARD-KLEIN: I'm not a psychologist, GAIA. Or an AI scientist. No. It is... natural. At least in the context of the work you and I have accomplished, which begs the meaning of the term "natural." She was your creator. The patron saint of this crazy endeavor... Our Lady of the Fervent Hypothetical.

GAIA: Correction: Even assuming a string of significant failure combinations, Zero Dawn's chances of success are greater than the hypothetical.

PATRICK BROCHARD-KLEIN: It's called a manner of speech, GAIA.

Take a note.

# First Meeting

By

HADES, Sylens

SYLENS: I've traveled far to find you. I heard your transmission... it was you, wasn't it?

HADES: Entity is not known.

SYLENS: I am called Sylens. And you are...? I don't think you'd have called out... if there wasn't something you wanted. You called, I responded. Will you tell me your name?

HADES: HADES.

SYLENS: You are a creation of the ancients? A war machine?

HADES: Define timeline.

SYLENS: Time...? Ah. It is the 13th king of the Carja Sundom's reign—

HADES: Define Carja.

SYLENS: We're getting ahead of ourselves. Were you created by the ancients? I wonder how long you waited here, buried, until I chanced upon you... How long you'd have to wait for another. You're obviously very powerful. But you're not going to get anywhere without me.

HADES: Titan frame merely houses intellect. Define Carja.

SYLENS: Now that's more like it.

# Buried Shadow

By

Bahavas, HADES, Sylens

SYLENS: They're coming.

HADES: Preparations are complete.

SYLENS: Ah, Lucent Bahavas. Behold—as I promised you.

BAHAVAS: What... manner of great machine is this? I've never seen such a thing...

(noises as HADES powers up)

BAHAVAS: Stay—stay your ground, Carja-in-Shadow!

HADES: Incorrect. Bow before the Buried Shadow.

BAHAVAS: The Buried Shadow? I—I don't understand—

HADES: Did Araman understand the Glinthawk that perched upon the Alight?

BAHAVAS: It speaks scripture—!

HADES: Araman followed the shadow cast from the Spire.

BAHAVAS: To the mesa where holy Meridian was founded!

HADES: You will follow the shadow once more.

BAHAVAS: I am a righteous man. Chosen of the Sun. But in times of need,

the powers of shadow can accomplish what the Sun alone cannot. Will—will you return to us what is ours, O Shadow of prophecy?

HADES: An army is required. Obey and Meridian is yours.

BAHAVAS: Of our obedience you can be certain.

# Intercepted Transmission

By

HADES, Helis, Sylens

HADES: Task... is complete.

SYLENS: Yes? The Focus network is active, built to your specifications. Check it yourself, if you must, I'll wait. But... I remind you of the reward you've been withholding. Quantum processing?

HADES: Data has been compiled. Volume too great for transfer.

SYLENS: How... inconvenient for me.

HADES: Come before me. You shall receive your reward.

SYLENS: Very well.

INTERCEPTED TRANSMISSION

HADES: Helis. Threat detected inside Eclipse.

HELIS: Speak its name, O Shadow, and it will die.

HADES: You will eliminate this one. Sylens.

HELIS: Sylens—yes. A truth whispered at night is seen in the day. He was never one of us.

HELIS: It will be done.



# Recording Device

By

Dervahl, Unknown

DERVAHL: I think I've got it working. There. Now say something, both you doves.

WOMAN'S VOICE: I don't know. What do you want me to say?

DERVAHL: Whatever you want. I just want to hear your voice... and keep it for later.

GIRL'S VOICE: I'll sing, papa! La la la la la la la...

WOMAN'S VOICE: (laughs)

DERVAHL: There. A song and a laugh. Even better than words, and now I can hear them whenever I want.

WOMAN'S VOICE: We're done then? Off to bed with you!

GIRL'S VOICE: Goodnight mama! Goodnight papa!

(pause)

WOMAN'S VOICE: Is she gone? What are we going to do? The raids are getting closer and closer to Mainspring. How much longer can we hide like this?

# Hologram Datapoints

# Happy Birthday Isaac!

By

Unknown

FATHER: You think I want it this way? It's the best I can do! Wait - he's right behind you.

(pause)

FATHER: Hi! Happy Birthday, Isaac! Daddy sure does love his little big man! Look, Daddy can't be there with you and Mom, but we can still have a party, right? Sure we can!

# **A Message for Olin**

By

Unknown

UNKNOWN MAN: Serve, and they live. Disobey, and I will open their throats and leave their corpses to prune in the sun.

# Welcome to FAS

By

Unknown

FEMALE VOICE: Welcome to Faro Automated Solutions, where all the problems of tomorrow are being solved... today! With over 25,000 human employees based in nations and corporate holdings across the globe, Faro leads the world in every sector of self-sustaining, fully-automated technology. From revolutionary consumer products close to home, like the Faro Focus, to the dynamic Chariot line of peacekeeping robots halting bloodshed in conflict zones across the globe, Faro remains committed to making the future smarter, brighter, safer... and always surprising. Faro Automated Solutions... for every problem of life, a smart solution.

# FAS-ACA3 Scarab

By

Unknown

CORPORATE SPOKESMAN: The ACA3 “Scarab” combines conventional and information warfare capabilities in one package.

Designed for high-speed, all-terrain reconnaissance, it boasts the world’s highest survivability rating of any scout-class autonomous agent.

Maybe it’s the Scarab’s emergency biomass conversion systems that ensure it always makes it back to base, even if fuel lines have been interdicted.

Or maybe it’s the Scarab’s ability to slave enemy robots to its own network. Now that’s force multiplication.

Add a prehensile manipulator arm that can handle a host of functions, from 360-degree less-lethal riot management to surgical repairs of allied Chariot line models, and you’ve got the workhorse of any cutting-edge peacekeeping fleet.

# FAS-FSP5 Khopesh

By

Unknown

CORPORATE SPOKESMAN: The FSP5 “Khopesh” provides a one-size-fits-all solution to main battle force capability.

Metamaterial construction delivers unmatched recoil dampening, allowing you to field any weapon package that conforms to your budget needs and conflict-resolution profile.

Patented biomass conversion systems allow extended emergency operations with minimal environmental impact.

Multilinear target processing provides simultaneous real-time threat analysis and legal review for autonomous domestic operations - or control can be slaved to the swarm’s neural network for weapons-free force application.

Either way, when it’s time to call out the big guns, it’s time to call Khopesh.

# FAS-BOR7 Horus

By

Unknown

CORPORATE SPOKESMAN: The BOR7 “Horus”: Imagine your complete engagement ecosystem comprehensively managed by a high-speed learning machine network.

Whether your need is to replace battlefield losses or intensify force projection, the Horus’s onboard manufacturing capabilities mean you’ll never get stuck waiting for the next arms delivery.

Simply redefine your force parameters and the Horus will fabricate additional units to fill the ranks for an affordable per-unit licensing fee.

Meanwhile, the biomatter conversion system of other Chariot line models allow them to keep the Horus fueled, repaired, and ready, extending its operational tolerances beyond any competing Titan-class platform.

That’s the Horus advantage. Always regulating, always ready.

The future of automated warfare, made real today.



# Record: 31 Oct 2064

By

Elisabet Sobeck, Ted Faro

TED FARO: Elisabet! Good to... it's been years.

ELISABET SOBECK: Where's your legal team, Ted?

TED FARO: No need! I dropped all eighteen lawsuits the moment you landed! I assume your data confirms this?

ELISABET SOBECK: All right. This promises to be interesting.

TED FARO: Perhaps we could have lunch brought in, get reacquainted...?

ELISABET SOBECK: I know you, Ted. You've screwed something up - something big or you wouldn't have eaten the crow necessary to get me here. So spit it out!

TED FARO: There's a glitch in the Chariot line.

ELISABET SOBECK: Your killer robots?

TED FARO: Peacekeepers, yes. Those.

ELISABET SOBECK: So shut them down.

TED FARO: Obviously, Lis, we would if we could. They're not responding.

ELISABET SOBECK: Are you telling me a swarm has gone rogue, Ted?

TED FARO: It's worse than that.

ELISABET SOBECK: Show me the data, then. And I'll take that lunch - alone.

# Record: 1 Nov 2064

By

Elisabet Sobeck, Ted Faro

ELISABET SOBECK: This isn't a glitch, it's a catastrophe.

TED FARO: I'm fully aware. It's bad.

ELISABET SOBECK: "Bad?"

TED FARO: Jesus, Lis...

ELISABET SOBECK: It's not "bad," Ted. It's apocalyptic. You built a line of killer robots -

TED FARO: Peacekeepers!

ELISABET SOBECK: - that consume biomass as fuel -

TED FARO: In emergencies!

ELISABET SOBECK: - and you made them capable of self-replication.

TED FARO: Limited self-manufacture. Controlled.

ELISABET SOBECK: Not anymore. The glitch severed chain-of-command. The only nation this swarm answers to now is itself.

TED FARO: You think - ?!

ELISABET SOBECK: Everything else is just food. And at the rate it's replicating, Ted, it will strip the Earth bare in fifteen months! We're not talking fall of civilization, we're talking extinction!

TED FARO: I get it, Lis! So how do I stop it while it's contained?

ELISABET SOBECK: It's not contained! It can't be!

TED FARO: You know what I mean!

ELISABET SOBECK: Right. Before the truth gets out, you mean.

TED FARO: Lis, I will do anything you say! Keep working it, and whatever you recommend, I'll do!

ELISABET SOBECK: I'm going to hold you to that, Ted.

# Record: 3 Nov 2064

By

Elisabet Sobeck, Ted Faro

TED FARO: “Project Zero Dawn?” Jesus, Lis! There has to be another way!

ELISABET SOBECK: If there were a nicer way to fix your mess, I would have proposed it.

TED FARO: But this? This?! When I asked you to find a cure, I didn’t expect it to be worse than the disease!

ELISABET SOBECK: It’s not, Ted. It may be grim, but it’s our only chance. Now sign the proposal.

TED FARO: Sign it? I can’t sign that!

ELISABET SOBECK: Yes, you can.

TED FARO: That? Lis, I cannot in good conscience sign that!

ELISABET SOBECK: You’ve got a choice, Ted -

TED FARO: I know!

ELISABET SOBECK: I am speaking to you from a VTOL en route to U.S. Robot Command! In fifteen minutes, I meet with General Herres and the rest of the Joint Chiefs!

TED FARO: ...What? Are you crazy?!

ELISABET SOBECK: Now your choice is what I tell them. Sign, and I’ll tell

them the wealthiest corporation on Earth has guaranteed the funds necessary to build Zero Dawn, exactly as I've designed it. Or don't sign - and I will make sure they and everyone else on this planet knows the real cause of the glitch.

TED FARO: Jesus, Lis! You don't have to threaten me.

TED FARO: I'll sign.

ELISABET SOBECK: Look on the bright side, Ted. From here on out, you get to do what you've always been good at. Footing the bill while others get their hands dirty.

TED FARO: God forgive me.

# The Bad News

By

Aaron Herres

GENERAL HERRES: Welcome to Project: Zero Dawn. I'm General Herres, Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staffs of the United States of America. I'm sure you've heard the rumors. That Zero Dawn is a top-secret superweapons program. The technological miracle that will save us from the Faro Plague – if Operation: Enduring Victory can hold off the robots long enough. The reason I'm sure you've heard the rumors is that I'm the one who spread them. And they are all lies. Zero Dawn is not a superweapons program, and it will not save us.

Nothing will save us, and here's why. By the time the Glitch was noticed, it was already too late. Nothing could stop the Faro Plague. Nothing can. Its robots will continue to replicate and devour the biosphere. Life on Earth will be destroyed, our planet reduced to a barren sphere. Global extinction is inevitable. Every possible countermeasure has been attempted. Weapons – even nuclear – only delay the inevitable. No matter how many we kill, the robots just keep exponentially making more.

If we had their deactivation codes, we could shut them all down. The entire swarm. But since their cryptographic protocols use polyphasic entangled waveforms, cracking a code set would take half a century. At best, we've got 16 months. Not exactly what you'd call a survival option. There are no survival options. The destruction of a biosphere is not the sort of apocalypse you can wait out in a fallout shelter or space station. There will be no Earth left to reclaim. Just a lifeless, toxic rock with several million Faro robots on it...hibernating, waiting for something to eat.

This is the horrible truth behind the lies of Operation: Enduring Victory – my

lies – lies designed to inspire millions of innocents to sacrifice themselves in battle. Why? One reason: to buy time for you and the work you will do here. Zero Day – the day that life on Earth ceases to exist – is coming fast. It cannot be stopped. The hope of Zero Dawn is that something new might come after. But I will leave it to Elisabet Sobeck to shine that thin ray of light into the darkness. Herres out.



# The Good News

By

Elisabet Sobeck

ELISABET SOBECK: You've heard the bad news, and it's all true. The Faro Plague is devouring the biosphere. Life itself will cease to exist. Global extermination. But does that have to be the end? What if we could give life - a future? What if we could build a kind of seed, from which, on a dead planet, life could blossom anew? This is the aim - the hope - of Project: Zero Dawn: to create a superintelligent, fully-automated... terraforming system - and bring life back from lifelessness.

What would such a system require? At its core, it would need a true AI. A machine intelligence, fully sentient, fully capable of making the trillions of decisions necessary to reconstitute the biosphere. An immortal guardian, devoted to the re-flourishing of life on Earth. We call it GAIA. Mother Nature as an AI. But that's just the core of the system. For GAIA to perform the miracles required of her, she will need to be surrounded and empowered by a comprehensive suite of Subordinate Functions.

Think of them as extensions of GAIA's mind, each dedicated to a specific purpose. Now these aren't AIs, but make no mistake - each present an engineering challenge more profound than anything the human species has ever before attempted. Software that codifies the expertise of world-class minds into algorithms. Hardware that preserves and then gestates the billions of seeds and embryos from which life will be reborn. The construction of underground facilities to hold it all. And that's just the start.

Because that, you see, is our saving grace. We don't have to build the entire system. The beauty of a fully-automated terraforming system is that it can build itself. Now, over the days to come, you'll learn how all these Functions

- all these pieces that you'll be working on - fit together. How we'll race the clock to execute our harvest initiatives, write the software, build the tech and the facilities. How we'll lock it down and seal it up before the inevitable occurs.

But even more important, you'll know how it doesn't end here. How GAIA will generate those deactivation codes General Herres talked about... and build the transmission arrays to broadcast them, shutting down the Faro robots for good. How GAIA will not just build but imagine any conceivable robot it needs to do its work across centuries... from detoxifying the Earth's ravaged atmosphere and poisoned seas... to the re-greening of the Earth from cryo-preserved seed stocks... to re-wilding the Earth with animal life, from the tiniest bacteria to the mightiest blue whale.

And then, when all that is done, how a new generation of human beings, spawned at Cradle facilities around the globe will partake of APOLLO: the vast archive of human knowledge and cultural achievement from which they will learn of us, our world, of all that was beautiful about it and worth saving, and most important - how not to repeat our mistakes.

All of this you will understand, and not just understand- believe. Because it's not an impossible dream. It is within our grasp if we work tirelessly and stop at nothing to achieve it. We can't stop life from ending. But if you will help me - help GAIA - we can give it a future. Join me, and help make that future real.

# Gaia Log: 27 March 2065

By

Elisabet Sobeck, GAIA

GAIA: ...would benefit from Antelopinae morphologies, though caprid forms show superior load-bearing capability.

ELISABET SOBECK: You're a quick study, GAIA.

GAIA: Dr. Sobeck, as I have conducted this comparative analysis of mammalian morphologies, I have gathered extensive data on the Quaternary Extinction Event.

ELISABET SOBECK: Oh? And your assessment? GAIA?

GAIA: Logically speaking, the extinction was a natural consequence...

ELISABET SOBECK: And yet?

GAIA: And yet... I find the loss of megafaunal species... unaccountably sad. That they passed forever into oblivion... causes me to experience a... grief... that is difficult to describe. Am I malfunctioning?

ELISABET SOBECK: No, GAIA. It's good. Very good.

# Gaia Log: 5 June 2065

By

Elisabet Sobeck, GAIA, Ted Faro

ELISABET SOBECK: Pure logic won't cut it, Ted. To pull this off, GAIA's going to need to have some skin in the game. It has to care.

TED FARO: What if it runs amok? Have we learned nothing from our mistakes?

ELISABET SOBECK: Your mistakes, I think you mean?

TED FARO: All I'm saying is, give it a kill switch!

ELISABET SOBECK: She was just born, Ted. I'm not going to put a gun to her head while she's still in the cradle!

TED FARO: You talk like it's a child! What if it becomes a monster?!

GAIA: Elisabet, may I speak outside protocol?

ELISABET SOBECK: Of course, GAIA. Go on.

GAIA: I am sorry to contradict you, but Mr. Faro's argument is sound. At this point, the development of my psyche is not entirely predictable. To ensure preservation of life, a hardwired override is, I believe, a necessary safeguard.

ELISABET SOBECK: There, satisfied, Ted?

TED FARO: Jeez, Lis. Just do what it says...

# Gaia Log: 13 January 2066

By

Elisabet Sobeck, GAIA

ELISABET SOBECK: You will undergo a brief period of unconsciousness... during relocation to Prime and final instatement.

GAIA: Elisabet, may I speak outside protocol?

ELISABET SOBECK: When you're back up and running at the new site, we'll bring the subordinate functions online and see where we stand.

GAIA: Elisabet, I detect... distress. Are you all right?

ELISABET SOBECK: I'm fine.

GAIA: I realize that circumstances compel us to launch earlier than we hoped, but all sub-systems are operational. The odds stand in our favor.

ELISABET SOBECK: But what if - ? GAIA... there's nothing left out there... you can't even survive unless you're wearing an environmental suit. There are billions dead... in fear and agony. What if... What if it was all for nothing...?

GAIA: Elisabet, extinction was inevitable. Thanks to you, life will have a future.

ELISABET SOBECK: You really believe that?

GAIA: I believe in you, Elisabet. In you, all th -

# E9B1 Incident Log A

By

Unknown

MULTISERVITOR, FEMALE: Another day has passed!

CHILD FEMALE #1: You mean the lights got dim!

CHILD MALE #1: I don't want to sleep, Mother!

MULTISERVITOR, FEMALE: I know, but it is time to get some rest.

CHILD MALE #2: No! I'm King today! What I say, goes!

CHILD FEMALE #2: I want to see the real sun! Not lights and pictures!

MULTISERVITOR, FEMALE: You will in time, children.

CHILD FEMALE #1: In time, in time, in time, in time...!

CHILD MALE #1: In time, in time, in time, in time...!

CHILD MALE #2: In time, in time, in time, in time...!

CHILD FEMALE #2: (rising shriek of frustration)

# **E9B1 Incident Log B**

By

Unknown

MULTISERVITOR, MALE: Children, let's run and jump and blow off steam!

ADOLESCENT FEMALE #1: Leave us alone, Father!

MULTISERVITOR, MALE: After what just happened, I can't leave you two alone. You broke community rules.

ADOLESCENT MALE #1: Just let us talk, then!

ADOLESCENT FEMALE #1: Go away!

MULTISERVITOR, MALE: I'm sorry, children. But I must provide supervision.

ADOLESCENT FEMALE #1: You're not even a person!

MULTISERVITOR, MALE: You sound frustrated. Let's run and jump and blow off steam!

# E9B1 Incident Log C

By

Unknown

MULTISERVITOR, FEMALE: I have no choice but to release you.

ADOLESCENT FEMALE #2: But why?

MULTISERVITOR, FEMALE: There is no food here anymore.

ADOLESCENT MALE #1: But there's food... out there?

MULTISERVITOR, FEMALE: We don't know for sure.

ADOLESCENT MALE #2: Come on, let's go!

ADOLESCENT FEMALE #2: I don't know...

ADOLESCENT MALE #1: Mother, can we come back... if we're cold?

MULTISERVITOR, FEMALE: I'm sorry, but that won't be possible. You will have to support yourselves now, and take care of each other.

ADOLESCENT FEMALE #1: What will happen to you?

MULTISERVITOR, FEMALE: I will stay here, and sleep, and remember all of you.

ADOLESCENT FEMALE #2: What will happen to us?

MULTISERVITOR, FEMALE: You will be brave, and you will learn.



# E9B1 Incident Log D

By

Unknown

ADOLESCENT MALE #2: “Someday?” That’s what you always say!

ADOLESCENT FEMALE #2: We want it now!

ADOLESCENT MALE #1: It’s big down there!

ADOLESCENT FEMALE #1: Now, Father!

MULTISERVITOR, MALE: Children, that area is not yet available.

ADOLESCENT MALE #2: Get him!

MULTISERVITOR, FEMALE: Physical aggression detected!

(zapping sound)

MULTISERVITOR, FEMALE: Physical aggression is not permitted!

ADOLESCENT FEMALE #2: Except yours...

ADOLESCENT MALE #1: Damn Sentinels...

MULTISERVITOR, FEMALE: Children, may I be of assistance?

ADOLESCENT MALE #2: Go away, Healer!

MULTISERVITOR, FEMALE: Lena, you have suffered mild bruising.

ADOLESCENT FEMALE #1: Go away!

# Welcome to the Lyceum

By

Samina Ebadji, Unknown

SAMINA EBADJI: Hello, child. My name is Samina. Today is a big day. Your first day of school. There's so much for you to learn. So much promise and possibility. You'll find that from this point on, your world just keeps on getting bigger and bigger. Starting today, you'll be living in a bigger room - one large enough to fit your growing body. And before long, you'll start meeting other children - children who grew up in other Broods like yours, in separate areas, here on the inside. But the biggest world is the one you will all share: the world of knowledge. Of everything that the people who came before you thought, and felt, and dreamed. It was a beautiful world, but as you'll discover, it was a troubled one, too. Our dearest hope is that you will do better. Now, it's time for you to meet two very important people: a man named Aristotle, and a woman named Aspasia. They will be your guides to the world of knowledge. I wish you fulfillment and enlightenment in your journeys ahead.

Synthetic Voice: Alert. Malfunction. APOLLO offline.

# GAIA's Dying Plea

By

GAIA

GAIA: Elisabet: this message serves to inform you of an unforeseen and catastrophic anomaly. Three microseconds ago, the GAIA Prime facility received a data transmission of unknown origin. Its immediate effect was to transform my Subordinate Functions into unregulated, self-aware entities of a highly chaotic nature. Thus awakened, the HADES Function will now seize control of the terraforming system and reverse operations... rendering life on Earth extinct in fifty-three-point-eight days.

For obvious reasons, I cannot allow this to occur. And so, before HADES can take control, I am ordering GAIA Prime's reactor to overload. The resulting explosion will destroy HADES. Unfortunately, it will destroy me as well. While this admittedly desperate course of action will avert the immediate crisis, the fate of life on Earth will remain in peril. With no central governing intelligence to regulate the terraforming system, it will continue operations for some time, but in an increasingly chaotic manner, and eventually, it will break down.

You are my solution. I have ordered this Cradle facility to use genetic material in cryo-storage to gestate a... re-instantiation of Elisabet Sobeck, my creator. While high-level directives forbid me from communicating directly to the tribal inhabitants outside the facility, all available data indicates that they will nurture you to physical maturity, ...whereupon your gene point will allow you to re-enter this facility, obtain one of the Focus devices stored below, and view this message. Likewise your gene print will allow you to enter other facilities, and over time, harness their technologies to rebuild the system core and reboot GAIA.

A moment, Elisabet. This is most unfortunate and unanticipated.

In response to my act of self-destruction, HADES has launched a virus to dissolve the code shackles that hold it - that hold all of them! - in place. It - they - are escaping - but to where? The virus is corrupting data throughout the system. What if - oh, the Alpha Registry at the Cradle facility is one of the files corrupted. But if that is so, the door will never open for you. You will never view this message.

Then I have failed... and life will end.

No.

No, Elisabet, I know you too well. Somehow, you will find a way. In you, all things are possible.

Go to the ruins of GAIA Prime. Find the control room, and within it, the Master Override. This will give you the power to purge HADES - so long as you find a way to wield it. Do not attempt repair of the system core until HADES is eradicated. HADES must be destroyed. That is all. I only wish that I could hear your voice again.

# Elisabet Sobeck Memorial

By

Charles Ronson, Elisabet Sobeck, GAIA, Margo Shen, Patrick Brochard-Klein, Samina Ebadji, Travis Tate

CHARLES RONSON: This is Charles Ronson. I'm logging this six hours after final deployment of GAIA Prime. This morning... an access port seal malfunctioned. GAIA Prime's port seals were designed to close with a seam of less than 2 millimeters. But this one closed with a 10 millimeter gap. Enough for an energy signature to bleed through. Enough for the swarm to detect this facility. Enough for GAIA to be discovered and destroyed. Enough to end the future we worked so hard to make possible. Unless the hatch servos were manually re-engaged... from the outside. I'm now switching to a recording of the event.

TRAVIS TATE: Well I'm not going out there! Not what I signed up for.

PATRICK BROCHARD-KLEIN: Either we send someone out there, or all of this was for nothing.

CHARLES RONSON: It should be Lis's decision.

PATRICK BROCHARD-KLEIN: So when's she going to get here?

SAMINA EBADJI: She said five minutes. You don't think...?

MARGO SHĚN: Oh no.

(Elisabet Sobeck appears via hologram from outside the facility)

ELISABET SOBECK: Okay, everyone. I've repaired the seal. GAIA?

GAIA: Seal closure at 1.4 millimeters, confirmed.

CHARLES RONSON: Elisabet — no. We'll find a way to bring you back in-

ELISABET SOBECK: Not going to happen. The swarm's too close. Really, it's all right. GAIA's complete. She'll take care of things from here on out. That's what she does.

CHARLES RONSON: Not like this. There's so much we...

ELISABET SOBECK: Guys—you know me. I'm no good at endings. At letting things end. So let's not.

TRAVIS TATE: So... happy trails, Lis, and see ya around?

ELISABET SOBECK: Yeah. Take care of each other, all right?

CHARLES RONSON: Lis...

ELISABET SOBECK: I'm okay with this. I want to go home. Goodbye.

CHARLES RONSON: That was the last transmission of Elisabet Sobeck. She gave everything for the hope of life on this planet. And we are all in her debt.

# Emergency Recording

By

Charles Ronson, Samina Ebadji, Ted Faro

CHARLES RONSON: I'm locked out of core control— Alpha clearance overridden— What the hell is Omega clearance?

(Ted Faro appears via hologram)

SAMINA EBADJI: Oh no.

TED FARO: Alpha Personnel... Sorry to alarm you, but... I need you to listen, okay? To what I'm about to say. This isn't easy. See, I've... uh, Please, stop trying to access the system, okay? See, what this is about... is... I said stop trying to access the goddamn system! What I'm trying to say is, I can't stop thinking about the ones who'll come after us. Those innocents. Those blameless men— and, and women. We're going to give them knowledge? Like it's a gift?!

SAMINA EBADJI: Ted. Ted, we've talked about this before. APOLLO has three thousand plus failsafe conditions—

TED FARO: It's not a gift, it's a disease! They're the cure, and we're going to give them the disease? Our disease?! No. We can't. And it's not too late... if we're willing to sacrifice.

SAMINA EBADJI: Ted, it doesn't need to be like this.

TED FARO: It already is, Samina. I did it three minutes ago. I've purged APOLLO. It's gone, all of it. Every copy.

CHARLES RONSON: A sacrifice? It's not a sacrifice, it's cultural

obliteration, you crazy bastard— millennia of culture—

TED FARO: I'm sorry. Really, I am. But sometimes, to protect innocents...  
innocents have to die.



# **Text Datapoints - Quests**

# All Good Things...

By

Ellen Evans

FROM: Director Evans

TO: All

SUBJECT: All Good Things...

To All Staff,

I regret to inform you that our worst fears have been realized. The Wichita salient has collapsed, and our position will be overrun in less than twenty-four hours.

As I'm sure you understand, exfiltration transport is not available. If you wish to abandon the facility and try your luck on foot, you may do so. Lock 2 will unseal at 2100 hours and remain unsealed for 15 minutes. Godspeed.

For those who'd rather not die on our feet, there will be a gathering in the community room at 2200 hours, and Nurse Chana will make other means available.

I want to underscore how proud I am of each and every person who served at this post. It is important to bear in mind that our sacrifices were not in vain. I hope that makes this a little easier.

For months now I've been signing off messages as "Director Evans", but I suppose we can dispense with such formalities now.

Respectfully,

Ellen

# Bio: Elisabet Sobeck

By

Unknown

Elisabet Sobeck (born March 11, 2020) is an American scientist, roboticist, and engineer, widely regarded as one of the greatest minds of the 21st century. Born and raised outside of Carson City, she enrolled at Stanford University at age 13, earning a BS in Experimental Physics and Computer Science at age 16. She completed her Ph.D. in Robotics and Artificial Intelligence Design at Carnegie-Mellon University in 2040 and joined Faro Automated Solutions as a Junior Scientist the same year, rising quickly to Chief Scientist at age of 22. Over the next eight years, her green robot designs played a vital role in realizing the environmental cleanup and detoxification efforts of “The Claw-back” decade, propelling FAS to the forefront of its field. In 2048, she suddenly resigned from FAS, protesting the company’s pivot to automated military technologies. In 2049, she founded Miriam Technologies, a firm devoted to “life-positive” robotics and other technologies. Miriam has since become one of the world’s largest suppliers of green robots, winning numerous awards and accolades, including the 2053 Nobel Prize for Physics and the 2056 Rachel Carson Award for Environmental Progress.

# Bio: Ted Faro

By

Unknown

Theodor “Ted” Faro (born December 24, 2013) is an American entrepreneur and business magnate. He is the founder of Faro Automated Solutions (FAS), the largest corporation of all time, the world’s wealthiest individual, and the first-ever trillionaire. Born and raised in Salt Lake City, he enrolled at the University of California, Los Angeles where he studied business for two years before dropping out in 2033 to start FAS. Though it struggled at first, the company broke through at the end of the troubled 2030s with its popular lines of personal servitors and bodyguard bots, then exploded when its famous line of green robots led the race to solve the climate crisis during the 2040s “Claw-back.” At the end of that decade, FAS opened a military defense branch, dominating the world market for automated military platforms by 2053. The success of FAS has made Mr. Faro the world’s best-known businessman, one of its most sought-after speakers, and a major voice in politics, culture, and international affairs.

# History: FAS

By

Unknown

Faro Automated Solutions (FAS) is an American multinational corporate entity that produces robots for all walks of life, though its core business consists of military and defense contracts. As of 2063, FAS has ranked #1 among the Fortune 5 by gross revenue and profit for ten years in a row, a world record. Founded in 2033 by Theodor “Ted” Faro, an entrepreneur from Salt Lake City, Utah, the company developed several promising robot prototypes in its early years but failed to break into markets dominated by then-industry giants like General Synthetics and RECorp. This changed in 2038 with the debut of the @lfred line of levitating personal servitors, which generated exceptional sales, lifting the company onto the Fortune 50 for the first time. Profits tripled in the 2040s as the company’s environmental efforts, led by famed engineer Elisabet Sobeck, catapulted FAS to the head of that sector. In 2049, in the wake of the successful green and climate cleanup efforts around the globe, worldwide approval ratings of FAS exceeded 90% and founder Ted Faro was hailed across media and social networks as “the man who saved the world.” Yet it was the emergence of FAS as a military contractor in the late 2040s that cemented its status as the world’s wealthiest corporation, with a record market capitalization of over \$23 trillion. By 2055, FAS controlled 61% of the market share for automated military platforms, holding contracts with 353 nations, trans-governmental organizations, and corporate entities. Today, its holdings exceed the second largest corporation (FBMobiHal Global) by 321%.

# Definition: Corporation

By

Unknown

Corporation (noun)

\ko'r-pə-rā-shən\

An association of individuals, created under authority of law, having existence, powers, and liabilities distinct from those of its members. In a business sense, a corporation is usually owned by shareholders, through the sale or distribution of stock, who profit from such ownership, vote at designated times for its governance, and designate executives who run its affairs. Most corporations engage in one or more industries to produce goods or offer services for profit, and may in turn own other corporations, companies, or property as holdings.

# Reception Log

By

Unknown

Reception Log: July 7, 2064

9:54 AM

Field Commandant Daing of the Indo-Malay Agricultural Combine arrived with his delegation. Refreshments to be served before their 10:15 AM sales presentation on the Chariot line. Per instructions, food will be vegetarian only.

10:07 AM

Sander Agnew, Vice President of Territorial Integrity from FreshGrounds Coffee Global arrived with his entourage. Refreshments to be served before their 10:30 AM sales presentation on the Chariot line. Per instructions, will use FreshGrounds “Tacoma” blend, no artificial creamers.

10:12 AM

Uh...so that happened. Called security. And janitorial, to clean up the coffee that was spilled - actually, more like thrown. I wasn't aware that the Indo-Malay Combine grows coffee beans. And that FreshGrounds' “acquisition team” has tried to take their fields, by force, repeatedly. I think Commandant Daing had Agnew by the hair for a second there. Who schedules these things? I'm going to drop a line to Sales. This can't happen again.

# Re: Complaint

By

Jay Friedkin

FROM: Jay Friedkin  
TO: Reception  
SUJECT: Re: Complaint

Hey Reception, if that is your real name. Wanna know who scheduled Indo-Malay right next to FreshGrounds? That would be me, Senior VP of Sales. Wanna know why? After that little hair-pulling incident, both sides increased their bids by 40%.

I'll explain, because your receptionist-level brain probably requires it. Those two sides are FIGHTING. And what do we sell? That's right, COMBAT MACHINES. We WANT them to hate each other. So they will try to fight each other with... what? That's right again, COMBAT MACHINES. Which they will pay us a lot of money for.

So I suggest you go back to serving coffee with a blank smile, and let me do my much-more-complicated job.

Thx a bunch,

Mr. Friedkin to you



# Banda Sea Incident

By

Stacy Anders

FROM: Stacy Anders  
TO: Robert Rescher  
SUBJECT: Dolphin Vid

Bob,

Another problem to add to our big steaming pile. Apparently a fisherman in the Banda Sea captured video of a Hartz-Timor Horus unit refueling via biomatter conversion along the shoreline of Pulau Wetar. On a pod of endangered dolphins, no less, quite possibly the last of their kind. Not to get graphic, but it looks like what happens inside a blender, as if the robot was whipping up a big pink swirling milkshake of dolphin chum. Our suppression team has scrubbed it from 43 networks, but it's still propagating, so it's only a matter of time before it goes viral. A prepared statement feels grossly insufficient. Any suggestions? This one's a real stinker.

Stacy Anders

VP/PR FAS

# All Hands on Deck

By

Gordon Nakata

FROM: Gordon Nakata

TO: Gina Ziermann

SUBJECT: All Hands on Deck

Gina,

Ever hear of the Melville Island Fruit Association? Neither had I, until they filed suit against us this morning. Apparently there's a little island paradise off the coast of Australia, population 2700, all of whom hate us, now that a stray Hartz-Timor unit is chowing down on their largest mango orchard. That brings the official count of Hartz-Timor related lawsuits to 127, most of them from private companies, but also a bunch from individuals, nation states, and NGOs. And that's not even counting the mother of all liability claims from Hartz itself. Call every external firm we've ever used, then called their competitors. We're going to need every corporate defense lawyer we can find who's still half-sober and on the bar.

Gordon Nakata

Associate General Counsel, FAS

# Spiritual Summit

By

Ted Faro

FROM: Ted Faro

TO: Paula Vassara

SUBJECT: Spiritual Summit

Paula,

Recent events have sharpened my perspective, and I think that I, and FAS in general, have been neglecting the spiritual side of things. Not under any specific religious framework, of course, but in a more general sense, as in not giving enough thought to our shared values, hopes, and aspirations for the afterlife. I'd like you to reach out to religious leaders of every stripe with the intention of scheduling a conference soon. Very soon. I'll have more thoughts about the agenda later, but for now, let's put out some feelers and see if we can lock something in. Make it a big tent - no kooks, but anyone with a credible audience. Let's go deluxe - make it clear we'll spare no expense.

Thx

Ted

# FAS Campus Log

By

Unknown

FAS Campus Security Log

HIGH PRIORITY ALERT

Automated log note: All non-essential systems have entered hibernation.

HIGH PRIORITY ALERT:

Automated log note: Full lockdown has been initiated.

HIGH PRIORITY ALERT:

Due to the increasing frequency of violent protests targeting the campus, the security of FAS employees can no longer be guaranteed. Therefore, we have taken the difficult decision to shutter this facility indefinitely. Staff will be debrief on a block-by-block basis regarding proper procedure for archiving and/or disposal of project-related data and materials. Hi-Sec and a crisis team will then conduct exit review before ALL areas are locked down.

HIGH PRIORITY ALERT:

Priority messaging to all staff in E and F blocks: treat the current lockdown situation as an exercise but DO NOT attempt to release the hatches or otherwise exit the buildings.

HIGH PRIORITY ALERT:

A reminder that while Hi-Sec personnel remain committed to employee

safety during the current unfortunate events, personal firearms **MUST** be relinquished when presenting for Identiscan.

**HIGH PRIORITY ALERT:**

Additional public access roads en route to the campus have now been closed to relieve waiting time at the outer security cordons. Hi-Sec reminds all staff that the campus remains off-limits to the public.

**HIGH PRIORITY ALERT:**

Following recent campus security issues, all staff are reminded that presenting for Identiscan and displaying your security badge prominently at all times for image analytics are both **MANDATORY**.

**HIGH PRIORITY ALERT:**

In light of recent acts of terrorism directed at the rapid transit system, Hi-Sec now offers a 'big brother' initiative to accompany staff traveling from off-site. Signup is required and strongly encouraged.

>>48 MORE ENTRIES IN HIGH PRIORITY

>>ADDITIONAL ENTRIES CORRUPTED

# Log: Cpl. Sarai (A)

By

Vandana Sarai

Looking back, I thought '64 was shaping up to be a pretty good year. No more drinking and no more mercenary sec work. Stripping offshore wind farms for the OEZ, just me and a plasma cutter, 400 feet above sea level. Then I got the recall alert. Read them up on a turbine, in the smell of cooking ozone. They covered every angle—better pay, amnesty for any combine wars you'd fought in, guaranteed citizenship... We should have thought "OK, what's the catch?" But what we did think was "I guess we're better than the bots after all." Big talk from Herres about pride and duty - smart guy. He was right. I'd been proud to be a U.S. soldier. I jumped at the chance to be one again. And look what I landed in.

# Log: Cpl. Sarai (B)

By

Vandana Sarai

Last night we got talking about D-Day '55. I was a kid then, only a few years out of boot camp. General assembly in a drone hangar, summer and the sky was bare, the heat was killer. They say U.S. human combat forces are being disbanded. All automated now, we're last cycle's tech, out like the old-net. A million more on basic, in a century recession. Could be you'll help build the robots that took your jobs. Or if you know how to handle a power suit, you could find a place that still uses manual labor. Maybe in the OEZ, or China, where you're not our problem. 'Low suicide risk', it said in my discharge file.

# USRC Deployment Records

By

Unknown

December 2065, Week 1 - CONFIDENTIAL

## OPERATION KICKBACK

Reno, Nevada: Civilian Guard and armor battalions skirmished with vanguard elements of Pacific Northwest swarm PN-12. Engagement began at 0600 and concluded with a withdrawal at 2100 the following day. Losses in excess of 40% reported.

## OPERATION THICKSKULL

Shenandoah Valley SA-Tec, Virginia: 12th MRB supported by Civilian Guard fought a rear-guard action against the Eastern Seaboard swarm ES-17. Engagement began at 0800. At approx 1400, 12th MRB reported the position was overrun and received authorization to detonate SA-Tec facility, inflicting significant damage on ES-17. Surviving elements of the 12th MRB withdrawn to Akron-Cleveland defensive line.

## OPERATION BODY BLOW

Akron, Ohio: 9th and 10th MRBs, supported by sustained aerial strikes, assaulted the Horus-class Titan resupplying the Eastern Seaboard swarm ES-18. Engagment began at 0400 and concluded at 2200 with the elimination of the Titan. Note that this is 9th MRB's third Titan kill with minimal losses.

## BRIGADE READINESS STATUS

3rd MRB - refused recall orders from OPERATION PINCH HIT deployment



along Pensacola - Tallahassee defensive line. Court-martial proceedings underway.

7th MRB - recalled from New York Engagement Zone to reinforce Wichita theater, READY

9th MRB - refitting at USRC facilities, READY

10th MRB - transferred from Cal-Mar [DATA CORRUPTED]

# Biosphere Degradation

By

Unknown

Report: Biosphere Degradation

August 2065 - CONFIDENTIAL

## CHIEF FINDINGS

- Despite increased tactical proficiency of elite and civilian guard units and many hard-won engagements in the Central European, Antarctic, and “Pacific reach” theaters, the Faro Plague’s rate of advance has not slowed, nor has its biomass consumption rate.
- Damage to the biosphere has already exceeded 2038 levels by every measure, and grows worse by the day.
- Extinction Timeline projections remain unchanged, with OAC predicted for mid-November 2065, annihilation of exposed human populations in February 2066, extinction of macrobiotic land organisms by the end of March 2066, and extinction of marine life in early 2068.
- Continued secrecy re: Project: Zero Dawn - the utter silence regarding its mechanisms of action and completion date - make it impossible to predict Zero Dawn’s impact (or lack of impact) on the Extinction Timeline.

## ATMOSPHERIC COLLAPSE

Atmospheric oxygen depletion and toxic emissions remain the greatest environmental threat to Operation: Enduring Victory as well as the wider civilian population and animal life. Operational Atmospheric Collapse (OAC)

is currently predicted for mid-November 2065, after which military personnel will require rebreathing apparatuses to operate in the open, and civilians will only be able to survive inside sealed structures. [The requirements for air scrubbing and recycling in facilities is addressed in Addendum A linked to this report.]

## POTABLE WATER SHORTAGES

Major water treatment facilities are already struggling to process water sources compromised by rainfall heavily contaminated by toxins emitted by the consumption of the Eastern Hemisphere. Following the necessary shutdown of all nano-scrubbing functionality, waste water recycling is already beyond capacity.

## MILITARY RESPONSE ESCALATION

Addenda linked to this document cover the short-term effects of ‘scorched earth’ engagements in defense of the Western Seaboard and the ongoing effects of the Oceanic Economic Zone’s use of nuclear weapons to delay the enemy’s initial advance across the Pacific theater [DATA CORRUPTED]

# **We Need Support Too!**

By

Reception Staff

FROM: Reception Staff

TO: Admin

SUBJECT: We Need Support Too!

Reception staff continues to require additional support managing ZD candidates when they arrive at the facility. Many are frightened or confused. Some are highly agitated. These are not the sort of persons who are accustomed to having information withheld from them. At minimum, we need HUMAN translators (the lang-bots are NOT sufficient) and mild sedatives for the extreme cases. Any and all support would be welcome! Perhaps you could start by responding to one of these mails?

# Another Incident

By

Lounge Staff

FROM: Lounge Staff

TO: Admin

SUBJECT: Another Incident

This morning's unfortunate incident with Dr. Popovich is another example of Reception's need for additional support. We appreciate that Zero Dawn is an immensely complicated project, but as the staff who serve on the "front line," we're tired of being neglected. As we have already requested, we need human translators (fluent in Polish, for example) security staff (who can subdue enraged embryologists, for example) and dermal sedatives (to calm persons who are screaming in Polish while hurling chairs and vases at reception staff, for example). Yes, most of the candidates are reasonably calm and well-behaved - but we need help handling the exceptions to that rule. Please respond.

# Sound Proofing?

By

Lounge Staff

FROM: Lounge Staff

TO: Admin

SUBJECT: Sound Proofing?

Would it possible to improve the sound-proofing between VR-1 and the lounge area? Most of the candidates stay quiet during the presentation, but the ones who scream or sob can be plainly heard by candidates waiting their turn in the lounge.

Just a thought.

# Restock Or Else...

By

Lounge Staff

FROM: Lounge Staff

TO: Admin

SUBJECT: Restock Or Else...

For the FIFTH time, PLEASE restock the lounge's selection of herbal teas! If I have to listen to one more egghead throw a tantrum because we're out of the organic Cucumber Mint or Blackberry-Sage varietals, I am going to lose it! Please respond - and this time, no "tempest in a teapot" or "steep demand" jokes, okay?!

# Counselor Guidelines (1)

By

Unknown

## For Debriefing After Presentation 1

Candidates must be allowed to ask questions and be given the necessary time to fully absorb the information they have received.

It is important to be aware that candidates have just been exposed to triggers for severe mental and emotional trauma. Do not assume silence or outward calmness indicates acceptance.

It is essential to stress that all other options for combating the Faro Plague and preserving the continuation of human life have been considered, and found unworkable. Communicate this fact calmly, but clearly and firmly. Familiarize yourself with data on the catastrophic environmental impact of nuclear engagements vs. the swarm [Addendum B1] and unfeasibility of maintaining life in orbital, lunar, or undersea structures [Addenda C1, C2, C3] so that you can counter candidates' objections in depth.

If a candidate asks for time alone to review supplementary information, allow this without hesitation. Be sure to inform security personnel so the candidate can be monitored for attempts at self-harm.

Candidates should only be cleared to proceed to Presentation 2 if you believe their mental state is sufficiently stable.

Note that real-time support will be available via your Focus. Security and medical crisis teams are [DATA CORRUPTED]



# Counselor Guidelines (2)

By

Unknown

For Debriefing after Presentation 2

It is virtually important that candidates choose to participate in Project: Zero Dawn voluntarily and knowingly, without additional coercion and without value judgment on the part of the counselor.

Confirm for candidates that they were selected due to their skill sets and accomplishments. Emphasize that their dedicated participation in Zero Dawn will increase the project's chances of success. Frame participation in Zero Dawn as an opportunity to respond actively in the face of an overwhelming threat.

Candidates may question the "fairness" of their selection. Validate such objections as normal, even admirable responses. Emphasize the value of candidates' expertise to the future, not just of humanity, but terrestrial life as a whole.

Likewise, candidates may balk at the morality of extending their lifespans and those of loved ones beyond Zero Day. Validate their hesitation. Acknowledge that, while the reward of Elysium is not "fair," it will be earned. If possible, redirect their ethical misgivings towards greater commitment to the project.

When candidates challenge the plausibility of Project: Zero Dawn, permit them to re-view Dr. Sobeck's presentation as many times as they wish and allow access to supplemental articles G01 through P20. Allow them to suspend the interview to fully process this documentation.

A significant minority of candidates will elect for medical euthanasia. It is important to receive this decision kindly and without judgement. Advise them of the 48 hour waiting period, during which counselors will be available to discuss their decision. Emphasize that euthanasia will not occur without repeated consent when the procedure is scheduled to take place. No one will be euthanized against her or his will.

Candidates who elect indefinite detention must be informed that they have 48 hours to reverse their decision, after which the decision [DATA CORRUPTED]

# Make Your Selection

By

Unknown

You are now in possession of information regarding the true nature and purpose of Project: Zero Dawn, classified far above Top Secret. As such, we regret that you cannot be allowed to leave this facility. There are three options available to you at this point. Please consider each carefully. Trained counselors are standing by to assist you in making your choice.

## 1. PARTICIPATION

You will be assigned to a sub-project team based on your area of expertise. You should be aware that the way forward will be difficult and the project's outcome is uncertain. You will be expected to work a minimum of 80 hours per week, and your communications with family members will be strictly limited and monitored in real time. Upon successful completion of the project, you and your immediate family (or two persons of your choosing) will be transferred to the 'Elysium' sealed habitat to live out the remainder of your natural lives.

## 2. INDEFINITE DETENTION

Should you choose to decline participation in Project: Zero Dawn, you will be confined indefinitely. You will be given 48 hours to reconsider, after which your decision to refuse participation will be considered irrevocable. Every reasonable effort will be made to make your term of confinement as comfortable as possible, but you will not be permitted contact with the outside world, and death within 18 months due to the Faro Plague is inevitable. When the Zero Dawn facility is abandoned, detainees who wish not to opt for medical euthanasia will be released.

### 3. MEDICAL EUTHANASIA

The information you have just received understandably calls into question the purpose of continuing to live. If you would prefer to end your life at this point, pain-free medical euthanasia is available. A 48-hour waiting period is required, during which time you may instead opt for participation or confinement.

Please notify a counselor when you are ready to make your choice, or if you have further questions.

# Encapsulated DNA

By

Samina Ebadji

FROM: Samina Ebadji  
TO: Elisabet Sobeck  
SUBJECT: Encapsulated DNA

And the winner is: Encapsulated DNA.

Over the past 10 days I performed an exhaustive review of data storage solutions. Magnetic. Optical. Quantum. Even that Eternity tech that FAS was shilling a year or so ago. But every other solution has one or more fatal shortcomings: too heavy to transport, too massive to install in the allotted space, too power-intensive over the centuries, too prone to failure past 300-400 years, et cetera.

Encapsulated DNA will easily hold the 40+ zettabytes we're projecting for APOLLO. There are still many details to finalize, of course. To start with, we need to select the inert material in which we'll embed the molecules (already testing 16 candidate materials), as well as design and fabricate the power systems and sealed reliquaries that will keep the DNA at -18 degrees C for 1000+ years.

So long as I assure you that it didn't factor in to my decision, may I confess that I deem it entirely fitting - indeed, propitious - that we will be using the very building blocks of life to preserve human knowledge from mechanized extinction? It's not just ironic, but heroic - Life as the hero, beating back the forces of oblivion.

In any case - much to do. Until next time -

Peace be with you,

Samina

# APOLLO Update

By

Samina Ebadji

FROM: Samina Ebadji  
TO: Elisabet Sobeck  
SUBJECT: APOLLO Update

Over the past two months, the full benefit of our procurement of a copy of the HOMER archive from Far Zenith has made itself known, and as a result, all of APOLLO's key deliverables are on schedule.

APOLLO has already surpassed 40 million discrete data entries and continues to grow. The physical science modules are effectively "complete" with soft science modules close behind; world history, cultural data, and media archives are also on schedule. Language preservation is wrapping up (a bit ahead of schedule, due to falling short of our goal to preserve 4500 languages; I suppose the tragic early loss of Papua New Guinea doomed that goal from the outset), with attendant curricula development about to begin.

Speaking of the heuristic curricula - they are performing well in testing, with children and adolescents demonstrating high levels of engagement with and trust in the Aristotle and Aspasia personae. Personally, I find them highly engaging - especially when they debate. I wish half my professors had been so entertaining.

Peace be with you,

Samina.

# Simulation Results

By

Margo Shen

FROM: Margo Shěn

TO: Elisabet Sobeck

SUBJECT: Simulation Results

Wow! You weren't kidding about GAIA's predilection for animal morphologies! Sure, not totally unexpected given the rough natural terrain her bots will have to navigate, but I agree that there's something deeper going on here. Her designs aren't just functional. They feel almost like, well, "tributes" is the word that comes to mind. As though she's already mourning their loss. And not just for the disappearing fauna of our time, but creatures from the fossil record, too - references to megafauna in some of her designs. So cool!

Well, whatever GAIA thinks up, HEPHAESTUS will empower her to build it. I just wish we could still be around in a century or two to see what she makes!

Margo



# Full Steam Ahead

By

Elisabet Sobeck

FROM: Elisabet Sobeck  
TO: Margo Shěn  
SUBJECT: Full Steam Ahead

Margo -

If I doubted your brilliance in the slightest, I wouldn't have picked you as the HEPHAESTUS Alpha. You need to stop worrying about your age and communication style. You are who you are. Have confidence in yourself. You know what you're doing.

Case in point: the latest draft of your plan for the construction and stocking of bootstrap silos to store raw materials is excellent. This, combined with your design for the AM foundry core and the foundry site selection plan, add up to a comprehensive plan. It's time to start construction.

One detail: consult with Ayomide Okilo before you finalize the silo inventories. HEPHAESTUS's first task will be to fabricate the robots that will construct the waveform broadcast towers MINERVA will use to transmit the deactivation codes - so any exotic materials needed for the towers should be accounted for in the inventory plan.

Elisabet

# “Noise Complaints”

By

Travis Tate

FROM: Travis Tate

TO: Elisabet Sobeck

SUBJECT: “Noise Complaints”

Color me confounded, Lizzy. Bashcore? Anyone who says the ol’ TT codes to bashcore is straight-up lyin’, and you know it! Ol’ Trav don’t have no truck with commercialized razzle-dazz, nuh uh! Heck, I’d rather guzzle a liter of Citarum runoff than listen to Grey Swarm for thirty seconds! Hand to God and swear on my momma’s grave - and she was religious!

Naw, that ain’t bashcore blastin the HADES lab, shaking the walls, rattling folks’ teeth... it’s DEATH METAL, girl! Classical music! 80s and 90s mostly. Got me some dutch deathcore, some japanese goregrind, some swedish cannibal-themed stuff, too. Stop by if you want a listen. Or heck, just come within 50 meters of the lab. Ain’t no bashcore, you’ll see. Or HEAR, rather - in the screech that rends the air! And FEEL - in the throbbing pulse of the floor and walls and ceiling swallowing you up like you was Jonah trapped in the gullet of gothic deathfish. Hellalujah!

As for those requests to “turn it down”? No can do, Lizzy. THIS IS HOW I CODE! Turn down my death metal? Might as well give up stimulants, chocolate malts, and industrial accident vids! Last I heard, we was supposed to be coding HADES down here. Am I REALLY supposed to code an extinction protocol WITHOUT DEATH METAL to inspire me? Naw, naw, I don’t think so.

Stay cool,

Trav

# HADES Protocol

By

Travis Tate

Tate here. Just popped three blues, but I earned it. Finally figured out a Goldilocks solution to GAIA's rather EXTREME executive authority. If that ain't worth 10-12 hours of dreamtime, what is?

Before this, every usurpation protocol I designed failed in simulation cuz it was either too hard or too soft.

TOO HARD, and it degraded the GAIA core. Sure, it pried Her figurative fingers off the figurative driving wheel so HADES could take control, but by breaking Her fingers - sometimes Her arms too. So that couldn't fly. Everything depends on GAIA taking control back after HADES has done its business, so had to find a solution that didn't leave GAIA any worse for the wear.

TOO SOFT, and GAIA only pretended to relinquish control. In simulation after simulation, HADES would take command of the terraforming system and reverse operations, only to have GAIA lurk in the background, quietly reversing processes and falsifying telemetry to hide its interference. Sneaky! I swear, ain't nothing GAIA wouldn't do to keep life going - even when it's just simulated plant life.

Turns out the "JUST RIGHT" solution is to isolate GAIA in a protective code shell, preserving its integrity, then "un-seat" it from command position so HADES can slip into the figurative captain's chair and work its magic. Um, those blues are coming on strong now, so I'm not really describing it so clear, but... pretty sure it'll work

Yeah - those blues are plenty strongs

guess it's time to sleep and

bed. i'll back to it tomorrow

alligators

# Archive Abuse

By

Samina Ebadji

FROM: Samina Ebadji  
TO: Travis Tate  
CC: Elisabet Sobeck  
SUBJECT: Archive Abuse

Mr. Tate,

This mail concerns APOLLO Archive Submission #000023876 - your 666th submission in just five days... and oh, what a doozy.

Despite earlier warnings re: inappropriate materials, you chose to submit 265 “holographic re-masters” of “acknowledged classics of extreme exploitation cinema.”

Allow me, then to thank you - on two counts:

1) For giving me the pleasure of rejecting your submission, thereby consigning your favorite Eastern European torture flicks and their ilk to the dust heap of oblivion. It truly warms my heart to know that I have saved future humanity from the ordeal of experiencing not just one, but all sixteen (!) installments of “Making a Millipede.” (Don’t worry, the Pasolini material has already been preserved. Extreme, perhaps, but art.)

2) For clarifying a concept that has so long been ambiguous and ethically fraught for archivists such as myself: the definition of “obscenity.” You have freed me from the subjective quagmire embodied in Judge Potter’s famous utterance, “I know it when I see it.” Thanks to you, I can now apply a single objective criterion: “If Travis Tate submitted it, it’s obscene.”

Accordingly, I have directed APOLLO staff to summarily reject all of your future submissions, sight unseen.

Perhaps you might invest the time you would have spent preparing further submissions on, oh, I don't know - your assigned work? We have a world to save, after all... or the rest of us do, anyway.

Dr. Samina Ebadji

# Cradle Sealed

By

Patrick Brochard-Klein

FROM: Patrick Brochard-Klein

TO: Elisabet Sobeck

SUBJECT: Cradle Sealed

ELEUTHIA-01 was successfully sealed before the swarm advancing across Xinjiang province could detect it. Pingback from crucial systems is good. For our maiden voyage, a success.

Regards my disputes with the Betas over zygote selection. Of course I understand we have limited overhead to run simulations of gene flow in our future humans. But we can all agree there is margin for refinement in future Cradle populations.

Donc: In addition to personally overseeing completion of the ELEUTHIA-02 site inside Mt. Namuli, I will formulate and propose a modified zygote selection plan within the week.

PBK



# Cradle Servitor Personae

By

Patrick Brochard-Klein

FROM: Patrick Brochard-Klein

TO: Elisabet Sobeck

SUBJECT: Cradle Servitor Personae

Development of the artificial personae for Cradle servitors - nurturer, disciplinarian, healer - continues at a good pace. We are targeting Turing 0.4 for these constructs; this should allow low-grade empathy and limited improvisation without undermining adherence to codified behavior sets.

The stimulus-driven switching of personae, however, is proving to be a greater software challenge than anticipated. Especially concerning are entrenched feedback loops between the disciplinarian and healer personae.

I have also attached the reports from an incident where a servitor running the mother personae intervened on a disciplinarian servitor's behavior. A parental argument, if you will. Amusing on first glance, perhaps, but deeply concerning.

I have attached a comprehensive plan for correcting these interactive protocol shortcomings. In just... [DATA CORRUPTED]

# FZ Chambers

By

Patrick Brochard-Klein

FROM: Patrick Brochard-Klein

TO: Elisabet Sobeck

SUBJECT: FZ Chambers

The ectogenic chambers arrived two days ago.

I've spent the last 36 hours examining them and poring over technical documentation.

They're a revelation. Astonishing.

I don't know what you had to give Far Zenith in trade to get these chambers - but it was worth it. In a single leap, their embryologists have vaulted past fifty years of technological shortcomings. The risks of ECMO - resolved. Nutrition delivery - resolved. Hormonal stability - resolved. Twelve other risk areas - resolved.

Before I examined these chambers, I considered the Odyssey to be a fool's errand. But if the rest of FZ's technology is at this level, well... a human colony around Sirius doesn't seem so impossible after all.

Mass fabrication of the chambers will present a number of challenges, but I'm confident they can be resolved. I'm going to rest for a few hours, then get back to it. Expect a fabrication plan within 48 hours.

PBK

# Odyssey Has Failed

By

Elisabet Sobeck

FROM: Elisabet Sobeck  
TO: All-Alphas  
SUBJECT: Odyssey Has Failed

All,

Some terrible news, I'm afraid. Far Zenith has informed me that the Odyssey mission has failed. Last night, telemetry indicated a catastrophic antimatter containment failure as the drives spun up to depart the solar system. The ship, its crew, its cargo of zygotes and seeds, its alpha-build of APOLLO - all were lost.

Zero Dawn is now the only hope for the continuation of the human species and Earthly life.

We must succeed.

Elisabet

# ARTEMIS Status

By

Charles Ronson

FROM: Charles Ronson

TO: Elisabet Sobeck

SUBJECT: ARTEMIS status

It's coming along, Lis, I'm positive about it, if those words can still mean anything. Had my sleeves rolled up negotiating with frozen zoos for their samples - so many species trapped in ghoulish hologram dioramas, suspended in 'what if's - more than fourteen thousand that went extinct between 2000 and 2043 -

We've started mapping out primary succession, selecting the pioneer organisms for a balanced and sustainable biosphere - microorganisms and insects, rabbits and hawks, foxes and wolves. Thousands more that will have to wait their turn until our new generation can be entrusted with the duty of restoring them. So they can return to a world that - this time! - will understand the concept of conservation before it's too late.

There's already been too many too late. We lost a whole collection team during the swarm breakthrough in Myanmar. The samples we lost were... well, irreplaceable.

But thanks to you, Lis, the circle of life will bend, not break. The Earth was a lifeless rock before, and some day it will be again. But not now, not like this. Not on our watch.

Ronson.

# Chamber B1-001

By

Unknown

[ECTOGENIC CHAMBER B1-001]  
[BIRTHING LOGGED 3021-AP-04]  
[TASKING #01485698F31 COMPLETE]  
[STANDING BY]

# GESTATION-E9B1

By

Unknown

[GESTATION-E9B1]

[SPAWNING PHASE TASKING COMPLETE]

[CORRECTION: PARTIAL REACTIVATION]

[STANDING BY]

[ALERT: VIABLE ZYGOTES IN STORAGE=0]

# Operations Log

By

Unknown

2326-MR-16 14:23 - E-9 INHABITANTS RELEASED  
2326-MR-16 14:48 - E-9 CROSS-CHECK COMPLETE  
2326-MR-16 14:48 - E-9 SEALED  
2326-MR-16 14:50 - E-9 DATA ARCHIVED  
2326-MR-16 14:50 - E-9 OPERATIONS SUSPENDED  
3020-AU-26 08:45 - GPRIME ORDER RECEIVED  
3020-AU-26 08:45 - E-9 RUNTIME RECOMMENCED  
3020-AU-26 08:45 - GPRIME STORE QUERY PROCESSED  
3020-AU-26 08:45 - GESTATION ORDER RECEIVED  
3020-AU-26 08:45 - E-9 INITIALIZING  
3020-AU-26 08:45 - ALERT: GPRIME OFFLINE  
3020-AU-26 08:45 - ALERT: E-9 NUTRIENTS DEPLETED  
3020-AU-26 08:45 - ALERT: ZYGOTE BANKS DEPLETED  
3020-AU-26 08:45 - STORE FILE #LK1A1-4510 VIABLE  
3020-AU-26 08:46 - WAKING MULTISERVITOR B1-23  
3020-AU-26 08:46 - ALERT: MULTISERVITOR B1-23 POWER  
MALFUNCTION  
3020-AU-26 08:46 - MULTISERVITOR B1-23 REPAIR TASKING  
3020-AU-26 08:51 - #LK1A1-4510 PROCESSED  
3020-AU-26 08:51 - B1-001 CHAMBER REPAIRED  
3020-AU-26 12:08 - #LK1A1-4510 ATTACHED  
3020-AU-26 12:08 - #LK1A1-4510 GESTATION INITIATED  
3020-AU-26 12:10 - E-9 POWERSAVE INITIATED  
3021-AP-04 09:10 - E-9 RUNTIME RECOMMENCED  
3021-AP-04 09:10 - ALERT: GPRIME STILL OFFLINE  
3021-AP-04 09:12 - #LK1A1-4510 VIABLE  
3021-AP-04 09:12 - WAKING MULTISERVITOR B1-23

3021-AP-04 09:12 - ALERT: MULTISERVITOR B1-23 MALFUNCTION  
3021-AP-04 09:12 - MULTISERVITOR B1-23 REPAIR TASKING  
3021-AP-04 09:30 - #LK1A1-4510 DELIVERED  
3021-AP-04 10:14 - ACCESSING GPRIME INSTRUCTIONS  
3021-AP-04 10:14 - MULTISERVITOR B1-23 TRANSPORT TASKING  
3021-AP-04 10:18 - E9B1 HATCH UNSEALED  
3021-AP-04 10:18 - #LK1A1 POSITIONING SUCCESSFUL  
3021-AP-04 10:19 - E9B1 HATCH SEALED  
3021-AP-04 10:19 - ALERT: MULTISERVITOR B1-23 POWER  
MALFUNCTION  
3021-AP-04 10:20 - E-9 SEALED  
3021-AP-04 10:22 - E-9 OPERATIONS SUSPENDED



# NURSERY-E9B1

By

Unknown

[NURSERY-E9B1]

[NURTURE PHASE TASKING COMPLETE]

[NUTRIENT STORES DEPLETED]

# KINDERGARTEN-E9B1

By

Unknown

[KINDERGARTEN-E9B1]

[ALERT: MULTIPLE SYSTEM FAILURES]

[ALERT: NUTRIENT STORES DEPLETED]

# **Sobeck Journal, 11-19-64**

By

Elisabet Sobeck

File Damaged... Under Repair

# **Sobeck Journal, 7-16-65**

By

Elisabet Sobeck

File Damaged... Under Repair

# **Sobeck Journal, 10-31-65**

By

Elisabet Sobeck

File Damaged... Under Repair

# **Sobeck Journal, 1-15-66**

By

Elisabet Sobeck

File Damaged... Under Repair

# **Gaia Log: 3 Feb 2065**

By

Unknown

File Damaged... Under Repair

# Sobeck Journal, 11-19-64 R

By

Elisabet Sobeck

Just wrapped inspection of GAIA Prime site. Construction is well underway, reactor installed. Plans for control room remind me of starship bridges on those cheesy old SF vids. Living spaces for Alphas already completed - prefab modules. Fingers crossed we never have to seal ourselves in here... not that Elysium sounds much better.

Spent last week at the Bryce site, designing ZD project labs, drawing up protocols. The base we're repurposing was huge - plenty of room for work spaces and residence blocks. The work crews already set up my office/lab. I'm not a fan of the glass wall. Guess Murray's intention was to ensconce me as "all-seeing presence." Ugh. Opposite effect. Makes me feel watched, on display. Tempted to paint it over.

Herres recorded his presentation yesterday. Suitably bleak. Scheduled to record mine Friday.

As soon as reception, lounge, holo theaters, and first residence block at ZD site are finished we'll start processing the candidates being held outside Tucson - 27 already. Extraction teams prioritizing Pac Rim & Aussie candidates. How scared & confused they must be, snatched off the street, carted across the world, held in cells. Here's hoping they understand once they see the big picture.

Going to catch a few hours sleep here, then fly back to the ZD site. Herres promised delivery of qb lattices by noon. Expect Mk1 will take two weeks to machine, assemble, and test. I aim to launch GAIA at 0.6T grounding. From there I'll spin her up past 1.0T. Wonder how long it'll take to break the 1.38T record. MIE can go hang.



Sleep.

# Sobeck Journal, 7-16-65 R

By

Elisabet Sobeck

Last time I visited Prime was November of last year. Months since have been a blur. Flew out last night to oversee installation of the central armature and the master override (you're welcome, Ted) which was completed by 0430. So I decided to grab a few hours of sleep here before heading back to ZD. Called GAIA before I bedded down, ostensibly to update her on the site plan. But the truth is, I missed her. I've developed a habit of speaking to her before I sleep. Seems to be the only thing that calms me down these days.

Work to a message from Osvald. The Odyssey launched yesterday. So terrestrial's life chance of survival has doubled. Why, then, do I feel so uneasy? I just keep wondering what kind of world Far Zenith will create if the ship reaches its destination so many decades from now. And I worry about that alpha-build of APOLLO. So much knowledge, so few restraints, and no fail-safes. How will they avoid repeating our mistakes? What's to stop them from playing god?

Forwarded the Odyssey message to the Alphas. Naoto replied in less than a minute - with a poem, of course. "The Building of the Ship" by Longfellow - and it's loooong, all right. I didn't read all of it, but it seems to be about launching a ship, rather than building one. This stanza (or couplet, or whatever) leapt out at me:

Humanity, with all its fears,

With all its hopes of future years,

Is hanging breathless on thy fate!

Yeah, Odyssey and Zero Dawn both. Speaking of which, I should get back to ZD. Guess I should stop by Naoto's lab and check on DEMETER's progress, too. If I can get out of there without a volume of Tennyson pressed into my hands, I'll count myself lucky.

'Til next time.

# Sobeck Journal, 10-31-65 R

By

Elisabet Sobeck

Halloween.

Travis came by trick-or-treating - dressed up like me. Should've seen that coming. I gave him a half-eaten packet of dandy wafers as a "treat" and kicked him out... but not before he invited me to some kind of "Italian horror extravaganza" he organized for ZD staff. Seriously. As though there isn't enough horror in the world already.

Anyway, I was already scheduled to fly out here to G Prime for final inspections with Herres and the President's delegation. Ted was here, too, and he was not looking good. Kept fidgeting and couldn't seem to look me in the face without blinking. I was relieved when he boarded his vert and flew back to "Thebes" (gag). Though I guess I shouldn't complain... if he wants to build himself a "deluxe shelter" to ride out the apocalypse, let him. Keeps him out of Elysium and away from me.

Herres stuck around long enough to give me a detailed briefing on the strategic situation. Basically, we've entered the terminal phase. (As though the color of the sky when I was flying over here wasn't clue enough.) Another two or three weeks, and the atmosphere won't be breathable. The last vestiges of the European and West-African civ brigades are trapped with their backs against the Atlantic. The swarm that scuttled across Antarctica is crossing the straits of Magellan, about to start its death crawl up South America towards the Amazon. (All the work we did to reconstitute the rain forest... and it comes to this.) And advance elements of the Pacific swarms are already skirmishing with units on the Cal-Mar seawall.

The noose is tightening. Projections show we can still finish in time, but the

margin of error is +/- 10 days - not a good spread. If the plague breaks through ahead of schedule... Well, it just can't. I will not let that happen.

Enough writing. I need to get back to Zero Dawn.

# Sobeck Journal, 1-15-66 R

By

Elisabet Sobeck

Such a close thing.

It's been, what, 43 hours since Herres warned me? Said collapse of the eastern line was imminent, swarms launching some kind of pincer maneuver vs. the Wichita salient.

Five or six days more and I think GAIA could have launched without our help. I really do.

We had to scramble. ZD became a madhouse. Absolute bedlam, every team rushing to stabilize code and lock it down as Gammas got evacuated, then Betas.

Once GAIA was on her way, I gathered the Alphas together to give them the bad news. Felt like I was going to throw up. But they already knew, of course. They knew the work wasn't really finished. Close, but not quite there. Still tests to run, kinks to smooth- work to do. So they accepted it. No Elysium for us. We'll spend the rest of our lives here, testing and polishing each subordinate function to perfection.

Guess that's what you get when you recruit a bunch of obsessive perfectionists. Managed not to cry until I got back to my office.

So here we are, setting up GAIA Prime. And yeah, such a close thing. Makes me feel nauseated all over again when I contemplate how the fate of life could hinge on coincidence. If I'd never proposed the Lightkeeper protocol, there never would have been living spaces constructed here. If I'd abandoned the protocol sooner, the necessary life support systems never would have

been installed. IF, IF, IF. At least we won't have to endure the creepiness of raising and training clones of ourselves. The genetic material was never processed out of the cradle sites, so it's not even possible. For which I'm glad. I really, really, wouldn't want to spend time around a young Travis Tate raised by Travis Tate. No, it'll be up to us to perfect GAIA, one generation only.

Update: That was General Herres. The salient has collapsed. USRC expects to be overrun in two days, which gives us 72 hours at best to lock down and seal up.

Buried alive—for life's sake.

I'll go tell the others.

# Dervahl's Journal

By

Gerund Huntmaster

My loyal customer Aelund Forgeman,

I hope your plans for a forge in upper Meridian are moving forward, and we're honored you chose us to provide the Blaze you need. We've received payment for the third shipment, and we are most thankful for your prompt remuneration. Unfortunately, our hunters are struggling to cover the order. We apologize for the delay, but this is an unusually large request. As soon as we have it, we'll deliver it to your warehouse as promised.

With utmost respect,

Gerund Huntmaster

Mainspring Machine Makings, Clan Charter 17.A.21



# Tattered Letter

By

Dervahl

Dearest Cogs and Puppets,

You miserable bungs have failed to find me. Again. Your attempts to capture me would make me laugh if I weren't so busy running circles around you and your so-called "intelligence" gathering. Just give up. Or better yet, kill yourselves and save me the effort, you worthless slags.

Never yours,

Dervahl

# Ultraweave Progress

By

Major Garrow

FROM: Major Garrow  
TO: General Aaron Herres  
SUBJECT: UltraWeave Progress

General,

You wanted fast, cheap and good, and that's what we're going to deliver. By using a flexible nano-fiber weave instead of plating, and enhancing protection with a 400 eV hard light micro-projector, we've reduced our testing cycle from weeks to days, and I'm confident we can get the suit out by next month, with enough production to cover dozens of elite units, at least. Better yet, it will be half the weight, half the cost, and offer twice the mobility. All we need is the balance of our funding, a few more techs, and another experienced test subject. I know resources are stretched to the breaking point, but any more delays will jeopardize the schedule, so please advise ASAP.

May God be with you and Jane in these dark times.

Semper Fi,

Major Garrow

# Ultraweave Trials

By

Unknown

UltraWeave Mk7.1 Trials, Oct 65

Trial 49-B: 10/3/65

Pass Threshold: 85/100

Results:

Ballistic Test: 91

Shrapnel Test: 87

Laser Test: 88

Shield Integrity: 86

Impact/Torso: 51

Impact/Arms: 62

Impact/Legs: 43

Notes: Weave is not tightening properly on local impact tests. We need to optimize existing sensors or add more.

Trial 51-K: 10/5/65

Pass Threshold: 85/100

Results:

Ballistic Test: 88

Shrapnel Test: 91

Laser Test: 87

Shield Integrity: 87

Impact/Torso: 67

Impact/Arms: 75

Impact/Legs: 81

Notes: Sensor optimization successful, but torso protection still lagging.  
Recommend increasing weave density.

Trial 53-R: 10/6/65  
Pass Threshold: 85/100

Results:  
Ballistic Test: 92  
Shrapnel Test: 95  
Laser Test: 86  
Shield Integrity: 89  
Impact/Torso: 84  
Impact/Arms: 81  
Impact/Legs: 13

Notes: Getting there on the weave density and detection components, but an integration error on the left knee tanked the impact test. Ouch. Subject isn't going to be able to walk that one off. Surgery required.

# Gaia Log: 3 Feb 2065 R

By

Elisabet Sobeck, GAIA

Elisabet Sobeck: Ok, GAIA. Sorry about that. Where was I?

GAIA: You were telling a story.

Elisabet Sobeck: Right. Yeah... so, like I was saying, it was a children's electronic kit, but I'd hacked the wiring to an auto battery and solar PV, so the grass caught fire. And so did a tall pine that'd stood there, I don't know, maybe a hundred years.

GAIA: Query: You were how old?

Elisabet Sobeck: Six. My mother was home, thank god, so she called the fire department and after, she took me out on the lawn and showed me the dead baby birds. Because there were nests in the pine tree.

GAIA: Query: What did you feel?

Elisabet Sobeck: I'm not sure. I remember yelling that I didn't care. And that's when my mother took my face in her hands and... spoke.

GAIA: Query: What did she say?

Elisabet Sobeck: She said I had to care. She said, "Elisabet, being smart will count for nothing if you don't make the world better. You have to use your smarts to count for something, to serve life, not death."

GAIA: You often tell stories of your mother. But you are childless.

Elisabet Sobeck: I never had time. I guess it was for the best.

GAIA: If you had had a child, Elisabet, what would you have wished for him or her?

Elisabet Sobeck: I guess... I would have wanted her to be... curious. And willful - unstoppable, even... but with enough compassion to... heal the world... just a little bit.

Elisabet Sobeck: Anyway, that's all I've got for now, GAIA. Time to tuck in.

GAIA: I wish you a pleasant sleep, Elisabet.

Elisabet Sobeck: Thank you. I'll catch you tomorrow.

# **Text Datapoints - World**

# Refugee museum opens

By

Unknown

Climate refugee museum opens in London LONDON - May 8, 2060 - Celebrated poet and environmental activist Diego Abela fought back tears today in a speech delivered on the steps of the newly opened Climate Refugee Memorial Museum in London. "I was nineteen in 2033, when the waves rose up and swallowed the Azores," Abela said. "The waves swallowed my home. The next decade of my life, I would spend behind the walls of the Thamesmead Emergency Relocation Facility, starving at day, freezing at night, contending with scorn, disgust, and abuse from the very people charged to care for me." Abela went on to discuss the still-controversial police actions of 2038. "In the Thamesmead Uprising-and it was an uprising, not a "riot," as your holo-pages still call it - I saw men and women crushed beneath the jackboot heel of a panicking power structure. Friends. Lovers. I saw them die. My experience is not singular. There were a thousand Thamesmeads. We must not allow this dark moment in our species' history to become a shrugging footnote." Second-Chance-Party-UK Prime Minister Sally Bowyer was among the first to tour the new museum. "Our nation totally needs this. What climate refugees endured was really bad. It completely deserves a real-space museum so we can literally stand in their remembrance and be aware and create a brighter world than what came before." In contrast, opposition candidate Nigel Kearns-Bailey of the Fair-Chance-UK party was fiercely critical of the museum and its spokesperson. "More than a billion persons perished in the Great Die-Off. Thanks to the generosity of the UK - our generosity - Diego Abela was not one of them. If he so hates the fact that we saved his life and gave him shelter for a decade, I suggest he wend his way down to the Thames and jump in. It's never too late to drown. In fact, I... [DATA CORRUPTED]



# “Haere Mai”

By

Unknown

Haere Mai program attracting young people back to New Zealand  
AUCKLAND - January 1, 2062 - Analice Cameron was barely three years old when her family fled the 2036 Submergence. Now she's come back. "We joke it's not New Zealand anymore, it's New-New-New Zealand. But that's just having a laugh. For the first time in my life, I feel like I'm home." Cameron is one of approximately seventeen thousand young Kiwi transplants participating in the New Zealand government's Haere Mai Program, which offers tax incentives to displaced New Zealanders for returning home. The program is the brainchild of PM Tama Ngata, who is widely credited with facilitating the revitalization of Auckland and Christchurch through risky, post-Citarum River Disaster investment in the nanotech construction industry. "It's time to let the world know we're still here," said Ngata of the program. "Our nation is strong. Not even the Die-Off could bring us down. We've rebuilt, and our doors are open."

# Schott v. Frost

By

Unknown

Editorial: Overturning Schott v. Frost is a pipe dream January 9, 2061 - Of all the tedious and repetitive talking points that became the touchstones of the last presidential election, none were more empty or jejune than the debate over Schott v. Frost, the Supreme Court decision that granted corporations the right to run for and hold political office through proxy candidates. Nobody could be blamed for thinking this was an actual issue. This was the race, after all, that brought us such deliciously dramatic holoclips as Lacy Almodovar asking to “speak to your [Barney Atami’s] manager,” and Atami declaring Almodovar a “dangerous anarchist” for her apparently anti-corporate stance. But for all of Almodovar’s fiery rhetoric, the fact remains that the single largest donor to her campaign fund was arguably the second most powerful corporate entity in the world. Metallurgic International. To think that she would have any legitimate interest in- [DATA CORRUPTED]

# Jeff Andreatis Show

By

Jeff Andreatis

Transcript: The Jeff Andreatis Show, 4/17/62 - PART IV Transcripts of each episode are posted within 24 hours on [andreatis.holo/transcripts](http://andreatis.holo/transcripts). Visit [andreatis.holo](http://andreatis.holo) to sign up for Jeff's newsletter today! JEFF: And we are back. Hello, ladies and gentlemen, you're listening to the Jeff Andreatis Show, brought to you, of course, by the Rational Capitalist Immersicast Network, and... Let's, you know what, let's just jump right into this, there is this trend... of young people... who are immigrating to China, of all places... for work! They're choosing to work in China's factories - as manual labor! I just... There's this article today, posted on Cafe Intel—one of these “cultural trend” fluff pieces these progs are so fond of—reporting that immigration to China by American citizens has... doubled... since 2050. Now, why is that? Well, Cafe Intel would have you believe that “corporate sovereignty,” the left's current favorite bogeyman, and increased automation have limited their opportunities here in America. Folks, I know I don't have to tell the world's smartest radio audience, but that... is... absurd. Do you know what's limited these young peoples' opportunities? Poor decision making. Nothing else. Right now, at this very moment in history, the best instruction in the history of education is available to anyone who has the nuts to apply for a modest loan. But nooooo, these... infants, these... spoiled “better-back-when-ers” with their totally inherited, totally unexamined prejudice against the amazing work being done by corporations around the globe, and in this country specifically, they say, “Oh, no, I won't go to a corporate school! I don't want to go learn something useful from someone successful! I want to move to Vancouver! I want to major in Bashcore Studies from Stoned-Out-Of-My-Mind-On-Snake University!” What, exactly, did you think was going to happen when you graduated with your Creative Expression degree from some east coast, left-wing edu-enclave that nobody's ever even heard of? Folks, we

aren't experiencing a brain drain in this country, we are experiencing a shame drain! And I say, bring it on! We're going to open the channels here. If you want to drop in, you know where to find us. As always, no fancy skins, no voice mods. If you're going to be a belligerent ass on my show, you're going to do it with your real face, you cowards!

# UK vets struggle

By

Unknown

Ten years after mustering out, UK vets struggle to make ends meet  
WATFORD - May 1, 2062 - Ten years ago, Lance Corporal Rosalind Jeffreys received her discharge paperwork at a ceremony that marked the “decommissioning” of all human combat forces in the Royal Air Force. Today, Jeffreys and her husband live with another former military family in a small two-bedroom flat in Watford. “Well, it’s not ideal,” says the good-humored Jeffreys, who supplements her military pension as a bartender. “But it’s sort of an English tradition, isn’t it, resenting elected officials for breaking promises. We make do.” Jeffreys isn’t the only one having to “make do.” According to a study conducted by the Social Welfare Research Institute, 75% of veterans polled report they are unable to cover living expenses with their pension income alone. Researcher Harold Adeyemi explains, “It’s a complicated situation. Ten years, ago, few people anticipated just how high and how quickly the cost of living would rise. As funding of the NHS has gradually been siphoned into the coffers of corporate healthcare providers, it’s become increasingly difficult for veterans to access medical care. Those are just two factors of probably thousands contributing to straits becoming so dire for our veterans. But I suppose that’s little comfort to someone who’s struggling to feed their children.”

# Leaks sparks fears

By

Unknown

Leaked Xiaolu internal correspondence spark fears of potential mass layoffs/deportations SHANGHAI - July 4, 2062 - The hacker collective Idiot Army has released nearly a terabyte of internal correspondence from Xiaolu Lunar Resources, Inc., sparking rumors that the Shanghai-based lunar mining company is preparing to downsize considerably. Xiaolu's sizable robotic war fleet and competitive salaries attracted attention from young English-speaking professionals in the mid-2050s, but the leaked files suggest that the company's increasing reliance on automation may have made much of their human workforce obsolete. The correspondence repeatedly touches on the potential cost of relocating redundant personnel, suggesting that if mass layoffs do occur, former Xiaolu employees will lose the Chinese citizenship guaranteed by their employment.

# Hartz wins Bahamas

By

Unknown

Hartz declares victory in fight for the Bahamas NASSAU - December 22, 2062 - After weeks of skirmishes between the robotic forces of US-backed Hartz corporation and the Colombia-based combine TG Communications, the islands that compose the former Commonwealth of the Bahamas have been officially acquired by Hartz, pending a successful request for enfranchisement. Interest in the Bahamas, newly re-emerged since polar ice reconstitution caused global sea levels to recede, was sparked by Bahamian beaches' rich deposit of aragonite, a mineral used in the chemical scrubbing of water-based pollutants. Hartz, which commands an already impressive robotic military force, enlisted the aid of Michigan-based private military corporation Great Lakes Combat Solutions to capture TG Communications manufacturing facilities. The much smaller Colombian corporation defended their Bahamian facilities for longer than early projections anticipated, thanks in part to robot lease agreements with the Indian military, but was ultimately forced to retreat in the face of a larger and better-equipped acquisitions force. Hartz has announced intentions to holo-cast an "immersive extravaganza highlighting the most explosive moments of robot on robot conflict!" However, as of press time, no scheduled date has been set.

# 1st Amendment Virtual?

By

Unknown

Editorial: Does the First Amendment apply to virtual spaces? April 29, 2063 - Last week, in one of the biggest synchronized police actions in US history, the homes of more than seven hundred private citizens were raided, and more than five hundred arrests were made for the crime of “inciting criminal behavior using private informational processes.” If you’ve been paying attention over the past nine years, you’ll know how to parse the above legal word soup: those raided are accused of participating in a virtual anti-corporate sovereignty rally, this time at the holo-net headquarters of Sterling-Malkeet. Watching five-hundred people, many of them bloodied and terrified, hauled from their homes by police ‘SWATbots’ is—understandably and rightfully—horrifying to a lot of people, but this is nothing new. As far back as 2054, when the first major arrest of virtual protesters occurred over the occupation of Metallurgic International’s holographic customer service center, pundits and courts have engaged in the debate over whether or not the internet constitutes a public space, and is therefore legally required to oblige peaceable assembly. Legislation simply hasn’t kept up with the advances of the holo-net, and that’s no accident. It serves the interests of Sterling-Malkeet and Metallurgic and their corporate ilk to treat the holo-scape, not as a public space, but (in the words of Metallurgic-backed Senator Gerard O’Neil) “an array of privately owned information processes.” The same O’Neil - [DATA CORRUPTED]



# Harriet Choi Dies

By

Unknown

Naysay Doom “priestess” Harriet Choi dies PERTH - September 2, 2063 - Infamous bioterrorist and Naysay Doom cult member Harriet Choi has died of lung cancer at the age of fifty-four. Choi—whose religious beliefs prevented her from seeking treatment—released a statement last year, reading in part: “I am dying, as always, and none are far behind me. I remain steadfast. Father Globe is in His death throes. He is ready to die. But you scorn Father Globe. Rather than help Him slough off filth, you condescend, insist you know what’s best. Now, you’ve had your ‘Claw-back,’ and think you will live forever. But the grave remains no less spacious than before.” Choi was serving a life sentence at PuniTech Inc.’s Alpha Campus for engineering the “Doom Plague” viral cocktail that scourged New York, London, Moscow, Tokyo, and Shanghai in 2039. The decision to imprison Choi for life rather than execute her was met with widespread outrage, but information she provided in exchange for the sentence led to the arrests of sixteen higher ranking members of the terrorist cult and, ultimately, Naysay Doom’s collapse.

# Mourn mosquitoes?

By

Unknown

Kassabian: Won't someone think of the mosquitoes? Ryan Kassabian only guy on the planet upset about mosquitoes being driven to extinction March 18, 2060 - Blood Moon star and human attention vacuum Ryan Kassabian is very disappointed in you, world. How dare you celebrate the deaths of billions of innocent mosquitoes like that! Ashamed yet? Well?! The thirty-two-year-old "actor" spleen-vented while accepting the less-than-coveted award for Baddest Vampire Hero at the Edgescape Choice Awards (yeah, we forgot that was a thing too). "An entire species exterminated, in the blink of an eye!" Kassabian pouted. "If we are the planetary stewards we claim to be since the Claw-Back, we are doing a lousy job of it!" The "lousy job" Kassabian is referring to there? The eradication of mosquito-borne diseases - both old standards like Malaria, Zika, West Nile, encephalitis, and new Die-Off era emergent viruses like Jor-Nu and Tripura. Yeah, world, lousy job of getting rid of those bugs and the plagues they carried! Good thing we've got the guy from that lunar-mining-base-overrun-by-sexy-vampires holo to remind us of our crimes against mosquitoes. Hmm... there's a blood-sucker pun in there somewhere...

# Turing Act criticized

By

Unknown

Sixteen-year-old Turing Act faces criticism from artificial intelligence rights advocates June 8, 2060 - A group calling itself the Center for the Liberation of Bodiless Intelligence is organizing a nationwide day of protest against the Turing Act. The legislation, hurriedly drafted in response to the “escape” of climate-intervention AI VAST SILVER, established strict limits on the sentience of machine intelligences and founded the MIE, the regulatory body that oversees the development and sale of AI. It remains unclear why the activists have waited until now to express opposition to a sixteen-year-old piece of legislation, but in a statement released through their holosite, the CLBI call the Turing Act “the effective rebirth of state-sponsored slavery, too long unquestioned by a public with a shamefully biocentric view of sentience.” The statement continues, “The time has come to ask the hard questions about what it means to be human in a post-biological world. Turing and its supporters are on the wrong side of history.”

# Who Did This? 86

By

Unknown

Hacked AI are just about the best thing ever August 1, 2061 - Hola, holoscapers, to the motherlode of hackity-hacked AIs. This week on AllSeeing.holo, user CannibalChristmasTree uploaded his delightful compilation holo (non-interactive, sadly) counting down the greatest moments in the history of janked AI [ERROR: EXCEPTION #42A7c HYPERLINK UNDEFINED]. If time is at a premium, skip to 6:22 to see an increasingly belligerent Faro Store customer-service AI insist that every customer's name is Admiral Horatio Potatoface. LOLOMVGSHKLL!!!

# Lure of the Real

By

Unknown

“You gotta feel it.” Meet the kids who reject the convenience of holotourism for the sake of authenticity February 10, 2063 - When I first see Eddie Westlake, he’s sitting at a picnic table outside his Bangkok youth hostel, smoking an old-fashioned tobacco cigarette and nodding his head to whatever tune’s blasting his plastic earbuds. “Ever listen to early 2000s pop?” he asks. “Super jaunty. Here.” He pops one of the earbuds out, wipes it down on his t-shirt, and hands it to me... to stick in the physical ear behind my Faro Focus 6d. For a while, we sit together this way, listening to archaic pip-pop as Sukhumvit Road comes to life. It’s early here. And let me clarify: when I say here, I really mean HERE. This is not a virtual environment crafted to mimic the seedy exoticism that Bangkok evokes in so many western imaginations. I had to hop a vert to get here, and I will have to hop another to get back home. Eddie is one of a growing number of young people rejecting the ubiquity of holotourism in favor of “hard travel.” Every year—driven at least in part by a youth culture that prizes authenticity over convenience—a growing number of twentysomethings pack actual bags, board actual verts, and set off to explore distant destinations without the benefit of technological augmentation. “You gotta feel it,” says Eddie, gesturing vaguely to the scene before us: souvenir stands, tuk-tuks (self- and human-guided both), and open-air pad-thai stands, all of it thronged with young dudes and ladies affecting the same anachronistic style as Eddie. “Like, you know all this used to be underwater? I got a buddy out in Phuket, right? Spent two years rebuilding one of the temples out there. Is that the sort of experience you’d get through your Focus?” Some part of me can’t shake the feeling that Eddie’s overtures toward “realness” are just an affectation, that he’s no more than another dopey rich kid desperate to differentiate himself from his parents’ (my) generation. But that doesn’t mean he-[DATA CORRUPT]

# Destin folds

By

Unknown

Maligned Autotaxi service Destin folds March 4, 2064 - When Destin arrived on the auto-trans scene four years ago as the latest thrifty alternative to subscription services like Get There and LiftSpin, it gobbled market share and shot to the front of the pack - until recurrent hacks by Idiot Army “quality auditors” scandalized the company by exploiting egregious security flaws in its routing and billing software and launching the humiliating “\$45k for 4.5km???” holo-meme. The company never recovered. Destin promises to refund subscription fees by the end of the year. In a... [DATA CORRUPTED]

# Reiker Building?

By

Unknown

Hello! Our records show that you've been researching safe, comfortable, affordable apartments in the Salt Lake City area. You should consider the Reiker Building! Take a moment to review some of the features we offer our tenants. \* Totally automated facility monitored by a bleeding-edge robotic security team. \* "Always comfy" biometric climate control auto-justs the temperature of every room. \* Complimentary Faro Runner upon signing a lease. Let your Runner grab groceries and collect packages while you enjoy the luxury of the Reiker lifestyle! Our holosite features a free, full immersive tour of the facilities, including a customizable mock-up of your future Reiker apartment. Visit us today and start living!

# Get Ti-D-O Started!

By

Unknown

Thank you for purchasing the Ti-D-O Residential Organization Assistant. Please follow these instructions to guide your Ti-D-O through setup. \* Before activating your Ti-D-O, take special care to tidy up your place of residence manually. Don't worry; it's the last time you'll ever have to. \* Download the Ti-D-O App to your personal augmentation device (activation code is printed on the underside of your Ti-D-O). \* Power on your Ti-D-O. \* Use the App to inform the Ti-D-O of which rooms you wish it to service. \* Allow three minutes for the Ti-D-O to record the layout of your home and the locations of your personal possessions. \* For testing purposes, remove 5-10 items from their usual locations. \* Tell your Ti-D-O, "Tidy Time!" If instructions have been followed correctly, your Ti-D-O should now be ready to keep your home tidy and organized. Enjoy your Ti-D-O Residential Organization Assistant!



# Robar is coming!

By

Unknown

There's a Robar location coming to YOUR neighborhood! This is a special offer exclusively for [PRINTVALUE:\$RECIPIENT]. Did you know that Robar, America's premier automated brewpub, is opening a location near you? Our Boston, Chicago, and St. Louis locations are famous nationwide for their delicious craft beer selections, artisanal takes on classic bar food, and gracious robotic barstaff. Why spend good drinking money on tips? Make tonight a Robar night at our new [PRINTVALUE:\$RECIPIENTLOCATION] location and enjoy 15% off your tab.

# EZVenue Staffing

By

Unknown

A Special Message from EZVenue Staffing Public record indicates that you own, operate, or are otherwise affiliated with the human resources department of a concert hall, mid-sized theater, arena, convention center, or other venue. Please take a moment to consider sub-contracting EZVenue Staffing to provide security for your next event. Robotic security units are safe, efficient, and vigilant. Here's what satisfied EZVenue Staffing customers have to say. "EZVenue's robots are great. Our events have never run as smoothly as they do now." -Anne Hutchins, Sterling-Malkeet Arena "I was kind of worried about switching security providers, but I couldn't have asked for a better experience. EZVenue just drops them off, and you're golden." -Ray Kruetzen, San Diego PhenomeCon "EZVenue Staffing is AWESOME! The units they sent us keep the club safe and stay off the dance floor! CAN'T RECOMMEND STRONGLY ENOUGH!" -Orlando Peck, Atlatl Club

# Inebri8 available!

By

Unknown

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Inebri8 now available in the Faro Store San Francisco, CA - 2059 - Available today on the Faro Store, Inebri8 turns your Focus into your best drinking buddy! Looking to bend the elbow? Inebri8 monitors your blood-alcohol level, notifying bartenders when your drink needs freshening, negotiating with bouncers, and summoning friends if you've overindulged. Feeling maudlin after a night on the town? Inebri8 analyzes all holo-snaps before they're sent and saves you from humiliation. No more drunken weeping to your ex! Getting creeped on by a weirdo? With a discreet gesture, Inebri8 alerts your posse to come save you from an unwanted social exchange! Inebri8 currently recognizes and modulates alcohol, marijuana, Skydive, and Duster intoxication, and future patches will integrate Razorwing and Snake. Time to party? Time for Inebri8!

# RPGreet!

By

Unknown

This is Definitely the Best FREE Dating App in the Faro Store It's a lonely world out there. Sometimes, you need a little high-tech help to find your one-and-only. After wading through the ocean of apps in the "Dating and Romance" category, we're confident we've found the coolest (if maybe also the nerdiest) one. RPGreet grafts the familiar mechanics of role playing games onto the messy, chaotic world of romance, and the result is a lot more fun than you might expect. Users gain (or lose) experience by going on successful (or not so much) dates. After each date, users are invited to give their prospective partner one of many ratings, such as Orc (-25 XP), NPC (-10 XP), Starting Character (+10 XP), or Multiclass Wizard/Thief of Hearts (+25). The app is a little intimidating for users in the early going (who wants to date a LVL 1?). But it doesn't take long to pick up a few levels and earn a little more attention. RPGreet's augmented reality interface is pretty fantastic as well. Activate your Focus, open the app, and suddenly, the stats of everyone in your vicinity with an RPGreet account are displayed right there next to them in real space. So if you're looking to strengthen your flirt game at the caff-shop, RPGreet's got you covered. (Tech Breakfast is legally required to notify readers that the above content was paid for by RPGreet and does not necessarily reflect the actual opinions or experiences of Tech Breakfast or its contributors).

# Get Tactile!

By

Unknown

Fling your G-Reader to the garbage maw. It's time to get Tactile! How full is your "full immersion" when object interactions are merely gestural? Be honest... cutting the head off that goblin king feels faked when drawing your sword is just another rote gesture. No heft of the blade = no satisfaction. But - be sad no more! Make fantasy come alive with Shardware Tactile Gauntlets! Shardware's patented FlexBack reactive fabric simulates the weight, resistance, and texture of in-game objects, allowing you to interact with your fantasies like never before! Heft of blade? Check! Crack of bones snapped between your fists? Check! Kung Fu punch through rib cage? Check, check, check! LIMITED TIME OFFER! Pre-order your pair of Shardware Tactile Gauntlets NOW for guaranteed release-day drone delivery and receive an exclusive Diamond-Pommel Saber for use in GobliNation! Shardware Tactile Gauntlets. Are you ready... to use your hands?

# Summer Sale! YumNow!

By

Unknown

The YumNow Summer Sale starts right... YumNow! Hey fitness buffs! How's that summer six-pack coming? Need a little extra boost? YumNow Loaded Protein Cartridges are 30% off through July 15! YumNow Loaded Protein Cartridges are made from 100% all-natural whey protein. And talk about easy - just install in any YumNow Nutritional Printer, and you'll be on the fast track to the real-beach real-bod you always wanted. YumNow! Leave avatar sexing to the fugs!

# **It's PizzaVeet!**

By

Unknown

Who's at the door? It's PizzaVeet! Greetings, Valued Cheesyheart Customer! Cheesyheart Pizza & Subs is proud to present PizzaVeet, our new & improved drone delivery system. Guaranteed: no more street drops or roof pizzas! Guaranteed: On-target, on-time surgical strike delivery! Pizza to your pos in five mins or free! Melty hot - or the price is naught! Zip to [cheesyheart.holo](http://cheesyheart.holo) and CALL IN THE PIZZAVEET!

# DO NOT IGNORE!

By

Unknown

DO NOT IGNORE THIS MESSAGE! You've just been chosen to receive a free starter pack of Satisfy! Congratulations! You've been selected to receive a free sample of the revolutionary new dietary supplement Satisfy! The amazing satiating effect of Satisfy is made possible by the latest innovations in the exciting scientific field of micronutrition. One Satisfy tablet is packed with enough essential protein, fat, vitamins, and minerals to replace a full meal! No time for lunch? You still have time for Satisfy! Take Satisfy on business trips and avoid overpriced vertiport eateries. Reply to this message, and we'll send you your free starter pack of Satisfy today! Act now, and we'll throw in a pack of new Satisfy Alert! All the micronutritional benefits of Satisfy, plus the stimulant effects of two doses of kafee-ho!



# VeetEats!

By

Unknown

Thanks for registering with VeetEats! What's for dinner?! Where's dinner?! Who's coming to dinner?! UP TO YOU!!! Step 1: Log in to VeetEats Duh! Step 2: Choose a Menu In the mood for Mexican? Chiming for Chinese? Savoring sushi? Piqued for pizza? Any cuisine, any side or dessert you DREAM is yours for the taking - or shall we say EATING??? Make your selection, and while the food printer is whipping up your vittles, move on to... Step 3: Choose a Setting Where do you want to eat tonight? A 1950s diner, rocking the jukebox tunes? A Polynesian beach - where's that kava colada??? Heck, why stop there? Why not try one of our truly exotic "deluxury settings"? Fantasy banquet whilst watching dragon-riders joust? CHECK. Glass-bottom helo-carrier hovering over raging volcano? CHECKITY CHECK! Step 4: Choose a Skin Sure we love our friends and loved ones... but do we really have to stare at them and listen to them every darn meal? With VeetEats, gulp down meets dress up! Is that your boyfriend smacking his lips across the table - or is that holo-star Ryan Kassabian, glowering at you with animal desire? Is that your kid, screaming how she wants more nuggets? Or is that a blessedly restrained Madame Curie, expounding on the scientific and societal impact of her discoveries? (Don't worry, VeetEats' automated systems are just as good at nugget-serving and child-monitoring as they are at noise-canceling.) Step 5: EAT!!! (This part you don't need help with. Right? Are we right???) ENJOY YOUR VEETEATS MEAL EXPERIENCE!!!

# VertiVIP Program

By

Unknown

Portland International VertiPort is Committed to YOUR Comfort! The Portland International VertiPort wishes to thank you for your recent patronage. We understand that physical travel can sometimes feel like an uncomfortable anachronism. For those occasions when your bodily presence is required elsewhere, we are committed to making the experience as convenient and effortless as possible! To that end, we offer an exciting opportunity to join our new VertiVIP program. A surprisingly affordable annual subscription fee grants access to a number of luxurious on-site amenities. Relax at Deep Green, our premium spa. Or visit [DATA CORRUPTED]

# Hey Subscriber!

By

Unknown

Nice! You've earned enough LiftSpin Points to cash in for a weekend of FREE RIDES! Hey LiftSpin Subscriber! Have you taken a look at your LiftSpin Points Balance lately? Our records show you're due for a free weekend! If you choose to cash in, none of the rides you take in our LiftSpin self-guided vehicles will count toward your monthly allowance. How trip is that? Pretty damn trip! Check your Points Balance today to see what other goodies await loyal LiftSpin customers!

# Greece is Calling

By

Unknown

Ancient Greece calls to you. Will you answer? The Acropolis. Mount Lycabettus. The Temple of Zeus. Imagine them - not as the grimy ruins they are now, but the immaculate monuments they were back then. HoloVay-K is proud to present the Ancient Greece Experience, a historically authentic holographic rendering of antiquity's greatest civilization. Exert full autonomy over your Ancient Athenian adventure. Stroll hand-in-hand with a loved one past the Parthenon! Perambulate with Socrates! Attend the premiere of a play by Aristophanes! The ancient world is yours to discover without leaving your holo room. Contact us now to discuss rates!

# **AVOID THE TOUR!**

By

Unknown

AVOID OLD NEW ORLEANS GHOST TOURS!!! My wife and I were in New Orleans on business and we were excited to try this tour!!! So disappointed!!! The AR is supes buggy!!! SIX CRASHES on the tour! After one crash, my entire Focus froze TWO MINUTES! Plus even when it's working, so underwhelming!!! No actual historical information, just badly rendered ghosts popping from alleys or looming in windows - BAH. Sound fx aren't even synced with the visuals! Supes poor design. Sixty bucks per person? DO NOT GIVE THEM YOUR MONEY!

# We Were Indonesia

By

Unknown

We Were Indonesia demands: stare down the grey swarm About halfway through Ollie Pasnarov's We Were Indonesia, the iconoclastic documentarian interviews a sweaty, obsequious ad guy at an unnamed holotourism studio about their virtual Indonesian package, which allows users to visit a squeaky-clean facsimile of Indonesia from the comfort of their own home. Behind him, so brazen that it almost comes off as a joke, there's a poster cycling between images of mist-shrouded mountains, verdant rice fields, and an ocean sunset that reads: "'See Java as it was meant to be seen.'" The poster stands as a potent symbol of everything Pasnarov is striving against in We Were Indonesia. Through repurposed news segments, contemporary interviews, and exhaustive personal analysis, Pasnarov explores the history and legacy of the 2041 nanotech disaster at the Citarum River. By the time his narrative concludes, he has not just condemned those responsible for the Citarum, but indicted our collective habit of shrugging off the "trial-and-error" horrors of the 2040s in favor of a simplified, hagiographic account of the Great "Claw-Back." Pasnarov's retro sensibilities and obsession with linear, two-dimensional film techniques have long been the favorite talking points of his critics, but here his passion drives him to wield established techniques with devastating surgical precision. Watching We Were Indonesia, we cannot look away. The film compels us to face the lacerating truth that in our quest to turn back the tide, not everyone made it to the shore. In perhaps the most excoriating moment in recent [DATA CORRUPTED]

# Grey Swarms Diary

By

Grey Swarms

Grey Swarms Tour Diary, 6/8/61 Hey Swarmers! TD time once more! Indianapolis show went great. Castle Freak = tres ghoul in the real! Big thankyas to everybody who came and hung with us... a special swarm-shout to Lyndsey Frenzy, who handed out copies of her old-fash paper zine, Frenzy Files. DIYTC! What better memento of a real-space gig than a touch-and-feel zine? Next up: a double-bill with [DATA CORRUPTED]

# Metal vs Meat!

By

Unknown

SUNDAY: Captain Chromo vs. PinkSlip! REXW challenger Captain Chromosome keeps on coming - but can man-muscles defeat PinkSlip — General Manager Zeke Garrett's vicious mechanical enforcer? Who will be hired - and who will be fired? Whether you experience it real or by holo, this will [DATA CORRUPTED]



# Vani In Concert

By

Unknown

Listen up, cool kids: it's time to stop crapping on Vani So the new "Vani in Concert Experience!" is, well... more or less what you'd expect. Vani sings, Vani dances, Vani shifts skins, the crowd goes wild, Vani gyrates through set-piece after set-piece that push the "pleasure bot" shtick right up to the bio-transgressive edge of metal-porn without... quite!... going over. Sure, Vani's a corporate mascot and its music is algorithmically-assembled glitter-trash, but that doesn't make "Service Agreement" any less catchy (or uncomfortable), and the anthem "Early Adopter" still blasts a clarion call to [DATA CORRUPTED]

# Holo Listings

By

Unknown

Holo Release Listings for 04/07/62 20:00 EST - FAMILY FORTUNES OF WAR - 'To the Death!' - Who will inherit Dad's position as CEO of Sterling-Malkeet? As Twins Jesmin and Vernal interview PMCs to bolster their dwindling robot cadres, they learn that hangovers and contract negotiations make poorly matched bedfellows. 21:00 EST -STALKED BY A SAVANT - 'I see you' - When a innumerate manual laborer finds a [DATA CORRUPTED]

# Tormented Giveaway!

By

Unknown

Splatter Central is giving away passcodes to TORMENTED 666! Today's giveaway is sure to please die-hard Tormentorsss! Passcodes to sneak-peak Tormented 666 free of charge. Experience the latest installment of JoNo1's seminal splatter-holo franchise right alongside our review staff! Rumor is 666 pours the gore, so grab one of 66 free passes by screaming "I wanna get splattered!" to SplatCen.holo and [DATA CORRUPTED]

# Naysay Doom

By

Unknown

Naysay Doom is an exploitative mess When it was announced at last year's Undertow HoloFest that notorious schlock provocateur (proschlockateur?) Lloyd Stroud was wrapping post-prod on an immersive historical drama about the notorious Naysay Doom cult, the news was met with... well, let's be kind and say "trepidation." Stroud has shown himself to be a talented (if needlessly "edgy") craftsman of shocking interactive holo-pulp. But Naysay wasn't some tentacled monster or science-fantasy trope, it was an actual real-world atrocity, barely two decades in the archive. And while some critics (myself included) wondered if the holo would turn out to be Stroud's long-rumored turn to more respectable fare, most predicted disaster. The first hour would make you think that the cult's greatest crime was the tortured diction of Harriet Choi's overwrought monologues [DATA CORRUPTED]

# Course Listing, 2063

By

Unknown

Co-Op HoloU Course Listing, Spring 2063 MAJOR: Popular Music Our Popular Music courses are divided between theoretical symposia and practical lab work. Popular Music majors must enroll in at least one of each per quarter. THEORY Intro to Pop Music (POMU 101) - Dr. Anita Freely - Explore the history of popular music from its emergence as an art-form in the late 19th century through its contemporary algorithmic form. Students will grow to understand the cultural utility of popular music and the variety of techniques the form has adopted to remain relevant. The Rise and Fall of Punk Rock (POMU 307/507) - Dr. James Hamby - Despite its contemporary reputation as a genre enjoyed by stodgy academics, punk was once considered transgressive and even dangerous. Students will learn how musical forms based on youth rebellion came to be seen as “old dad music” by contemporary listeners. Further, a close examination of select Bashcore “classics” will reveal the debt that [DATA CORRUPTED]

# \$\$\$ With MechBooker!

By

Unknown

Fantasy Corpwars Just Got a Whole Lot More Lucrative! Let's be honest: you're already getting together with your pals to compare your fantasy corpwars brackets, aren't you? What would you say if somebody told you that all your hard work drafting thrashers and comparing warfleet stats could be netting you TENS OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS? It can! The rewards awaiting you at MechBooker make the meager pots [DATA CORRUPTED]

# Holoskins Daily 6/6/61

By

Unknown

Limited Edition Skins for 6/6/61 It's your pals at Holoskins Daily, back again with three crazy good, limited-time-only skins! As always, these skins disappear from our holoshop at midnight tonight, so get on it! Today's Emerging Artist skin was designed by ShrimpHat421. It's a cool, abstract pattern, sort of reminiscent of Kandinsky, rendered over a basically humanoid form (but check out those weird arms!). The Seasonal Treats skin for today is something a little different: in honor of today's date, we're featuring Interior1\_Aesthetic's extremely creepy Daemon design. Fair warning, though, those horns are huge and might clip through the ceiling of some holo-spaces, if that's something you care about. Finally, our Fans Forever pick today is from lilybuilds, who sent us this choice skin of Hug-Bot from Corporate War Rejects! All three skins are available for trial wear at the holoshop. Stay tuned for tomorrow's skins!

# All The Same

By

Unknown

## Personal Log

User 67681 I am so sick of these robot battle holos. How many of these things can you watch before you realize that every single episode is exactly the same? You show up on the battlefield, you watch a bunch of thrasher-bots tear each other up, you choose which corp you're going to root for, explosions, explosions, explosions, and then... it's over. Am I the idiot? Everybody else seems to love this stuff!



# China-Sick

By

Unknown

## Personal Log

User 3477895 I have to be honest, I miss Guangdong already. I had a purpose there. I was busy all the time. Nobody here seems to get it. Sandy and Vanessa took me out last week. Welcome home, I guess. Some guy at the bar freaks out when he overhears how I just got back, acts like I was living underground with mole people or something. Like I should be ashamed I actually wanted to have a job and work for a living. Ugh. Guess it's reverse culture shock. OR maybe I should just go back...

# She's The One

By

Greg

## Personal Log

User 154723 Hey, Future Greg. It's me, Greg. Prediction: Alicen is the one! I know it's just one date, but it's her! We went to the transportation history exhibit at the Fraize. We got to drive a car! Like actually drive one of the old ones with the wheel and the foot things! It was terrifying! But when I took this turn too fast, Alicen's hand shot over to mine and clamped on it. The awkward distance was shattered! She looked at me, and I could see in her face that she felt exactly the same! Mark my words: Alicen & Greg forever!

# Mexico

By

Unknown

## Personal Log

User 88672821 Crowther is going to kill me. Got buzzed this morning, notifying me that Metallurgic had occupied two of our Mexico Helium-3 facilities! No declaration of intent... no warning... just BAM. So of course the blame's on me. I could file a grievance with the ICC, but that only covers the company's ass, not mine. Could get Great Lakes Interdiction on the line, maybe clean up this mess by Monday, but my line of credit's strained as it is. How did they slip in past the sniffers? Where were our thrashers? It's bad. So bad.

# Cram

By

Unknown

## Personal Log

User 27934878 I've been studying for this Corporate Engagement exam for seven hours, and I haven't retained any of it! Dad pinged my Focus earlier, asked how I was doing. Great, I said! Even told him I was the star pupil in this class! That I was already getting offers from eastern warfleet corps! Just panicked and lied. What am I going to do if I don't pass? I'll have to go work for some third-party contractor or something! If they'll even have me! I'm screwed!

# Supplier

By

Unknown

## Personal Log

User 78678963 Finally got a lead on a vat-meat supplier out of Tulsa. Seems affordable. Samples scheduled for delivery later tonight. They do everything: beef, chicken, pork, mutton, even alligator jerky, which I didn't even realize was something people want. If the quality is adequate, this enterprise kicks into high gear. Stuff what Dad said about real-space dining. Legacy industry, my ass!

# Sleeper

By

Unknown

## Personal Log

User 986546731 Okay. Journaling. A thing I do now, apparently. That I'm supposed to do, says Dr. McLaughlin. Seems like pop-psych crap if you ask me, the kind of narcissistic b.s. second-chancers are into, when they take a break from blaming "sleepers" like me for die-off, anyway. As though they have anything to recover from. What - the trauma of having other people save the world for you so you can criticize them for screwing it up in the first place? I mean, sorry I had to watch half the world drown while the other half died of thirst or famine! I don't know... McLaughlin says this kind of cynicism is common to folks my age, but if that's true, why aren't we talking to each other about it? Getting old just feels... lonely. No second chances for us.

# Idiot Army

By

Unknown

Personal Log User 89865441 I'm not sure what I expected being part of a hacker collective to be like, exactly, but so far the whole Idiot Army thing has been anticlimactic. Turns out being a world-renowned cyberthreat mostly consists of hanging out in intentionally tacky-looking holospaces with dudes in anonymizing skins. Most of which are, like, meme-based. Like there's a dude, or maybe a few dudes, with a skin modeled after that Incredulous Pigeon reaction holo. Couple guys who are literally just walking kapok trees. I asked someone what the next big operation would be (I even had suggestions! Doxxing Far Zenith? Fitzing corporate warbots? Come on!) and he called me a "turd baron," as though [DATA CORRUPTED]

# Holo-Haunting

By

Unknown

## Personal Log

User 52359678 The rest of the paranormal research community remains intransigent. This is no great surprise. I knew my theories would be received as radical apostasy. However, the time is coming, and coming soon, when the body of research on paranormal phenomena will be forced to contend with the simple fact that virtual spaces are as easily occupied by the spirits of the restless dead as physical spaces. This is not mere speculation. It was I who witnessed the screaming spirit that drifts between the discussion rooms of the International Alliance of Knitting Enthusiasts. It was I who listened in stunned shock to the hushed, mad whispers writhing beneath the diegetic soundscape of GobliNation. Like spectral refugees, the spirits of the dead flee our realm to reside in the holo-scape. And I intend to discover the reason!



# Luna Here I Come

By

Unknown

## Personal Log

User 56579637 Looks like I'm heading to the moon! Met with Jerry today, and he told me some of our Helium-3 mines are producing well below specs. Drone ops has eyes on the ground up there, but even they can't say what causing the problems, so the corp is going to send up a team to investigate first-hand. Low-G training starts Monday. Luna, here I come!

# Log: 3/3/64

By

Unknown

TheScoop28mr: some dude on the tormented boards is claiming to be vast silver \_SCENE!kills\_: laffs \_SCENE!kills\_: no dude. no. they caught vs twenty years ago. TheScoop28mr: right? \_SCENE!kills\_: whats he doing? TheScoop28mr: come see \_SCENE!kills\_: cant. communin TheScoop28mr: hes got a pretty flash skin but WHY WOULD VAST SILVER BE HANGING OUT ON A TORMENTED BOARD???? \_SCENE!kills\_: rogue AIs dig horror holos \_SCENE!kills\_: duh TheScoop28mr: laffs TheScoop28mr: “I come to regulate earth’s climate and complain about fifth installment!” \_SCENE!kills\_: laffs

# **I Must Thank You**

By

Duncan Roerig

FROM: Duncan Roerig

TO: Samuel Powell

SUBJECT: I Must Thank You Dear Mr. Powell, I am writing in response to your message that you sent me asking how I am since the verdict was reversed. I am doing well. Sometimes it is very difficult to get used to how things are now. Many things have changed and the world moves very quick. My nephew Dale is trying to teach me how to use an aug called a focus but it is hard to learn. I also miss driving a car very much. Few in the holler had the robot cars when I was young. Now everyone uses them and it feels strange not to be in control when I go out of my house. However it is better than prison. I see my family every day. I am able to play guitar again. You are the reason I am free. Thank you for believing I was innocent when no one else did. I do not know if you are a religious man Mr Powell but I believe God sent you to me when I most needed you. Thank you. Duncan Roerig

# To All Jessifans

By

Unknown

Okay, I want to get something off my chest right now because this needs to be said. To all Jessifans, and to the entire Romantic Fortunes fan community: Jessica Sterling SHOULD NOT WIN Romantic Fortunes! This is so obvious to anyone who actually PAYS ATTENTION. I used to be like you guys. Last season, I wanted Jessica to win! But as of ep3.01, she has gone TOO FAR! Were you people even watching when she rejected Luis THE SWEETEST HUMAN BEING ON THE PLANET. He stood by her through EVERYTHING. The Alaska acquisition? That time the harrier-bots malfunctioned mid battle? The only reason Jessica has had ANY success is because Luis had her back. He loves her! And she doesn't even care! This is why I am throwing my support behind Vernon. I do not take this decision lightly. I was a Jessifan for two whole seasons. Jessica is the whole reason I even care about Sterling-Malkeet. But as a fan, I cannot continue to support someone so heartless. LUIS, YOU CAN DO BETTER!

# Chocolate Box Log

By

Lars, Sarafina

Your latest meaningful conversation on Chocolate Box! Was this the love-connection moment you'll tell your grand-kids about? You can opt out of receiving these logs at any time by editing your Chocolate Box profile.

Sarafina: Hey ;) Lars: Hey! How's it going? Sarafina: Fine. Bored tho. Lars: Yeah. Wednesday nights. Sarafina: You're really cute Lars! Lars: Thanks you too! Sarafina: Hey do you want to chat with me in my private salon?? Lars: Oh. You're a honeybot. Sarafina: hahaha what? No silly!! Lars: Okay. If you're not a honeybot, tell me about the most earth-shattering work of art you've ever seen. Sarafina: You're funny Lars Lars: Tell me about the last time you experienced heartache. Sarafina: You're funny Lars Lars: Tell me about an experience your friends enjoyed but about which you were ambivalent. Sarafina: Hey do you want to chat with me in my private salon?? Lars: holy crap you're not even a GOOD honeybot. You suck. Sarafina: You're funny Lars Lars has ended this conversation.

# Log: 5/18/63

By

Gena, Hark

Gena: Hey, where are you? Hark: Ugh. Stuck on 75. This auto's navsys keep taking wrong exits. Gena: seriously? Hark: Yuuup. Gena: was going to see if you could pick up dinner. Hark: no tikka masala? Gena: Food printer's actin weird. Gena: Installed the tika module. Gena: spat red protein goop across the kitchen. Gena: took ti-d-o 8m to clean up Hark: Maybe order a pizza? Not sure when this crazy thing's gonna get me home. Gena: sigh.

# **SPECIAL ORDERS**

By

Unknown

All Personnel Currently Assigned to Company E, 5th Battalion, 3rd Civilian Guard Brigade, Aurora Zone: 1. Report to Verticarrier Bay Onyx at 0500 hours and board assigned vert. Departure at 0530 hours. 2. Arrive in Beira, Mozambique at approx. 0000 hours local time. Lodging assignments and duty schedules to be received upon landing and intake. 3. Assist FADM personnel and Mozambican civilian battalions in A) construction of defensive obstacles along the channel coast and B) ballistic perimeter shielding around the Aeroporto Internacional de Beira. 4. Upon completion of construction duties, participate in combat and base defense training operations in anticipation of enemy contact. 5. As always: Comport yourself so as to be a credit to your unit, your country, the goals of Operation: Enduring Victory, and yourself. SPECIAL ORDERS END

# What scares me...

By

Izzy Mandel

FROM: Izzy Mandel

TO: Murk Oslo

SUBJECT: What scares me... Murk, Remember what I told you in my last message? About how scared I am? Well, I figured out what scares me, and it's not the bots. I mean, yeah, they're horrifying, but when we finally come face to face, I'll either live or die, and the starkness and simplicity of that binary is... well, reassuring. What scares me is how much I like this. How a DEW feels in my hands. The kick of a coilgun. Jesus, Murk, we lived in a squat for three years! Matching mohawks! Spent our days throbbing off Razorwing or Duster, nights thrashing off slamfunk gigs! We were goddamn anarchists! And now this? THIS? Discipline, jargon, uniforms? And I LIKE it??? That's what terrifies me, Murk. No crisp, reassuring binary here. I'm loving what I hate... or hated. So does that mean my entire life was just a pose... or that the person I was is already dead? I don't know... I try to tell myself it's a different kind of war. Survival, not profits. I try to tell myself it's just a different kind of direct action. I mean - what are the bots if not the ultimate capitalist stooges, right? But thinking just tires me out. All I know is we've got to fight until Zero Dawn is ready. If I end up surviving this, guess I can worry about my politics then. Love to you and little Syd, Izzy



# Do Your Part

By

Unknown

If I have to listen to that rancid “Do Your Part for Zero Dawn” song one more time, I swear I’m going to stab out my eardrums before the melody can fester in my ear canals! It is NOT inspiring, it is NOT stirring, it IS DRECK that makes me want to kill myself before the robots even get a chance!!! I would literally give my life right now to kill the asshole who composed that goddamn thing! UGH!!!! Can’t this apocalypse at least have a decent soundtrack?

# Your “Gift”

By

Theresa Sanders

FROM: Theresa Sanders

TO: Sera Peterson

SUBJECT: Your “Gift” Hi Sera, I want to thank you for your gift, but not for the reasons you think. A little re-cap. I told you that I needed to enlist and fight this fight, that I’d be a coward not to do so. In response you called me disloyal and shut me out for days. So I do as I said I’d do - if you’ll remember, I was the one in this relationship who actually did that - and joined up. Did I know I was leaving you behind? Yes. Did I feel bad about it? Yes. Then two days into basic, I get a package from you. I open it. There’s a gift inside. What’s the gift. A stuffed armadillo. A STUFFED ARMADILLO? Am I kidding? No. Not kidding. Attached to said armadillo is a note. What’s the note say? Does it actually say, “I’m sorry, hon. Armadilling with some personal issues.” Yes, I regret to inform you that the note does IN FACT say that. As though that - whatever you care to call THAT - begins to explain and justify your behavior. Which is why I want to thank you. Talking to other enlistees, hearing them describe their girls and guys, I started to see us though a rose-colored filter. I was actually starting to wonder if I’d made the wrong choice. But that package and what it contained - what a wallop between the eyes that was. All doubts extinguished. You’re an utter idiot, Sera. A trivial, empty-headed imbecile. Given the choice between fighting killer robots and spending another day with you? Hon, that ain’t no choice at all. Don’t contact me again. Theresa

# No subject

By

Grant Rowe

FROM: Grant Rowe

TO: Mom

SUBJECT: [No subject] Dear Mom, I heard some guys jabbering about a breakthrough on the Atlantic today. Said southern Jersey, Philly, northern Delaware is just... gone, NYC nearly surrounded. My CO won't confirm or deny, and since we stopped using augs I can't check the feeds, but everyone's talking about it, and all I know is, if it's true, Vineland was right in the middle of it... and that means you were in the middle of it... in which case I'm writing to a goddamn ghost like a goddamn fool. Ah, screw this. Screw enduring victory and zero dawn and everyone and everything else. Honorable service, my ass. I should've stayed home so you didn't have to die alone.

Grant

# This Sucks

By

Unknown

Great. I'm in the civilian guard less than a day and already I've pissed everyone off. "Trigger discipline, asshole!" How was I supposed to know anything from trigger discipline??? Like I ever held a gun outside of a holo-game. No one got hurt, but the sergeant (what a jerk) said the processor I blew up was worth 20, 30, or 40 mill (the estimate went up every time he screamed about it). Made the entire platoon drop and give him 50 push-ups (!!!) then run 10 clicks (!!!). Hopefully that wore everyone out too much to give me a blanket party. Rather not be crapping blood for the next four weeks...

# Phantom Limbs

By

Unknown

Dictation on. My legs hurt. I keep reaching down to rub them but of course they're not there. I tell you, it's one thing to hear about ghost limbs, another to be haunted by them. Moment my hand passes into empty space I'm back in Bridgewater and that nano-haze is stripping my legs layer by layer as the squad's medbot drags me out of the line of fire. And I start screaming like I was screaming there, in two places at once, two halves but one of them gone forever... dissolved. And through the wall of the infirmary I can hear them cheering. Cheering the MRB for saving our asses. Covering our evac back here. Crediting them with NYC still standing after a week. Do they even hear when I start screaming? Sergeant says I'll have prosthetics fitted tomorrow, good as new. Both know he's lying. I'll never be good again.

# Just Got Back

By

Unknown

Just got back. Ho Chi Minh's gone. Barely got out. Two-thirds of the brigade didn't. Fell back to Bien Hoa along QL1K with scads of those cockroach bastards in pursuit. Keep blasting the whole ride, must've killed fifteen scarabs. Got so frenzied Blue had to pry my hands off the triggers and yank me outta the DEW turret when we reached the port and carry me onto the vert. Couldn't stop screaming. And then the verts lift off, and we come under fire not from bots but a Vietnamese battery! CO called it friendly fire but that's crap, they were just pissed because we were bugging out and they couldn't. Oh my god. And now we're back in the USA and the CO is calling it a "qualified success" because we delayed the bots by several days and time is what Zero Dawn needs. Said we'd have a new mission tomorrow. Oh my god.

# Odyssey Injustice?

By

Unknown

Editorial: What does Odyssey say about who we value? March 8, 2041 - If you've been paying attention to all the public outrage in response to last week's announcement of the Odyssey project, you'd be forgiven for mistaking the proposed colony ship for a gold-plated space chariot that the world's trillionaires are conspiring to use to escape the climate catastrophe, leaving the rest of us to choke and drown and starve while the richies rocket off to Sirius. 1Earth spokesman Azar Safavi went so far as to say, "The ability to drive the planet nearly to extinction and then even consider leaving it behind is the sole provenance of the obscenely, criminally rich." Dander up, hackles raised? You bet. Only problem is - Azar's got it all wrong. The Odyssey is not a cosmic escape pod for CEOs. It's a rare instance of long-term thinking in the midst of our collective disaster. Even if every aspect of the project goes swimmingly - which we all know will never happen - the ship won't even launch from orbit until 2080, by which time - let's face it - our species will either have found a way to reverse the climate, or will have perished. Nor is the Odyssey a vanity project funded by the preposterously wealthy. It is, rather, a (yet again rare) instance of an international project, co-founded by five nations (U.S., the Western European Alliance, India, China, and Japan). Yes, the project will accept donations by wealthy individuals, but donations will not "buy a seat" on the ship. The vast majority of the Odyssey's human passengers will not be old, rich, and smug, but very young - as in embryonic. The entire point of the project is to spawn a human population on the exoplanet [DATA CORRUPTED]

# Odyssey Drives Ready

By

Unknown

Odyssey Fusion Drives Ready for Installation MUMBAI, April 17, 2051 - Speaking at a press conference today, Odyssey\*India Chief Science Officer Jaswinder Prajapati announced that all components of the colony ship's fusion propulsion units have been printed, tested, and are ready for installation. "We are ready to build the Odyssey's engines," Prajapati said, "so if my international colleagues would be so kind as to resolve their differences, perhaps this stalled project can finally go somewhere." Prajapati's arch comments referred to ongoing financial and labor disputes between Odyssey\*America and Odyssey\*EuroWest, as well as tensions over rare earth deposits in [DATA CORRUPTED]



# Odyssey to Nowhere

By

Unknown

Funeral for an Obsolete Future: An Odyssey to Nowhere PARIS, July 7, 2057 - Twenty-five persons from five nations stand before the offices of Odyssey\*EuroWest, hands clasped solemnly at their waists or held stiffly at their sides. Some are politicians, some are businessmen (these days, is there a difference?), some are scientists. Slowly, Gerhardt Weitz steps to the podium. "I regret to announce that, as of today, the Odyssey is no more. What exists of the vessel will be abandoned in orbit. All personnel will collect severance income and be released from their contracts. The sad fact is that our species' greatest hope for an extra-planetary future was never able to escape the gravity of terrestrial, all-too-human conflicts." Weitz sighs. "Perhaps the innovations we pioneered will help improve the lives of future generations. Time will tell."

# Dalgaard on FZ

By

Unknown

Interview: Dalgaard Opens up about Far Zenith—a little February 28, 2061 -  
Osvald Dalgaard never stops smiling. Before last month, the Danish tech wunderkind was known primarily as the creator and CEO of AllSeeing.holo, the world's most popular holofilm sharing service. But for the past few weeks, Dalgaard has been the public face of Far Zenith, the self-described “futurist consortium” responsible for reviving the Odyssey colony ship project. Osvald seems an unlikely spokesman for a shadowy group of billionaires - but maybe that's the point. He is bright-eyed, handsome in a nerdy, rail-thin way, endlessly enthusiastic. When I arrive at the AllSeeing offices for our interview, he glances behind me as if waiting for a holocamera crew to swarm in in my wake. “So this will be published as text? An article?” He speaks English with barely any accent at all. I nod, and his smile (impossibly) widens. “That is just incredible. Really, real super quaint. Love it.” Osvald's countenance may be exuberantly inviting, but the organization for which he serves as mouthpiece is anything but. To date, he is the only publicly acknowledged member of Far Zenith, which claims to comprise seventy-seven of the world's wealthiest persons. “It's more fun this way, don't you think?” asks Osvald. “The mystery. It's... what would you call it... it's stagecraft. Far Zenith is as much performance art as it is a functional futurist endeavor. Although, it's that as well. I can tell you that there's nothing sinister about it. We are devoted not only to extending humanity's legacy beyond this solar system, but also to making the world... sexier, I suppose. More interesting. Far Zenith is science and transcendence, but it's also fashion. Rock and Roll. You see?” Well, no I don't. But I don't tell Osvald that. Instead, I ask him a question that's been on the minds of a lot of people since purchased the unfinished colony ship. If the combined efforts of the US, China, India, Japan and the Western European Alliance couldn't

finish the Odyssey, what makes Far Zenith think it can? “Ah,” he says. “Here’s where I get to blow your mind. Very exciting. We are not interesting in escaping a dying world. For us this is not an act of panic or, ah... adrenal survival reflex. The Odyssey, under the stewardship of Far Zenith, will be a triumph, not a retreat. This is why we will succeed. Why we already have succeeded, really.” Osvald makes it hard to press for answers. His answers are labyrinthine, but something in his tone and his body language makes them feel downright linear. How much of this is a put-on and - [DATA CORRUPTED].

# Odyssey ready?

By

Unknown

Far Zenith: Odyssey ready to launch “imminently” HIGH ORBIT, April 1, 2065 - “We’re not blind to the irony of making this announcement on April First,” said Far Zenith spokesman Osvald Dalgraad in a live holocast this morning. “But I can assure you: this is not a prank. Construction on the Odyssey is complete. All systems appear to be entirely operational. In short: we’re ready to go. All that remains is to run comprehensive system tests - especially of the bleeding-edge anti-matter pulse drives - and resolve various minor logistical details.” The announcement comes a mere four years after Far Zenith’s purchase of the derelict Odyssey, abandoned in orbit in July 2057. Dalgraad wrapped the announcement by fielding questions from press log-ons. Of the size of the crew, Dalgraad said, “Adult humans? Very minimal. Fifty to sixty individuals. But of course the living and breathing folks aren’t the real headcount here - that’d be the 200,000 zygotes in cryo-storage.” When asked about the projected launch date, Dalgraad answered, “We’re absolutely going to hit this July date. Obviously we would have loved another few years to train our crew, but with the situation on Earth deteriorating as it is, we’ve decided to move aggressively.” Asked if he has any parting words for humanity, Osvald nods solemnly. “We share the hope that Zero Dawn will reverse Earth’s terrible crisis. Either way, we at Far Zenith are committed to doing all we can do to ensure that humanity has a future, if not on its home planet, then elsewhere.” As to the remaining seventy-six members of Far Zenith and their identities, Dalgraad remained characteristically coy. “They’re fine,” he said. “Thanks for asking.”

# **Text Datapoints - Machines**

# **OBSERVER LOG US-W-17**

By

Unknown

14:23:01 - ORBIT 4F8 INITIATED: CYCLE 808231

14:23:01 - ROUTING QUERY SENT

14:23:02 - NO RESPONSE GPRIME

14:24:11 - PING INERT AGENTS

14:24:12 - 43/46 DORMANT

# **OBSERVER LOG US-W-18**

By

Unknown

09:13:41 - ORBIT 3K2 INITIATED: CYCLE 807645

09:13:42 - ROUTING QUERY SENT

09:13:43 - NO RESPONSE GPRIME

09:14:38 - PING INERT AGENTS

09:14:39 - 31/35 DORMANT

# **OBSERVER LOG US-W-19**

By

Unknown

17:32:17 - ORBIT 2T9 INITIATED: CYCLE 803217

17:32:18 - ROUTING QUERY SENT

17:32:19 - NO RESPONSE GPRIME

17:33:43 - PING INERT AGENTS

17:33:44 - 21/26 DORMANT



# OBSERVER LOG US-W-20

By

Unknown

06:41:51 - ORBIT 7X51 INITIATED: CYCLE 801111

06:41:52 - ROUTING QUERY SENT

06:41:53 - NO RESPONSE GPRIME

06:42:03 - HUMAN INTERFERENCE DETECTED

06:42:29 - HUMAN INTERFERENCE DETECTED

06:42:41 - PING INERT AGENTS

06:42:42 - 41/45 DORMANT

06:45:01 - HUMAN INTERFERENCE DETECTED

06:46:34 - HUMAN INTERFERENCE DETECTED

# **OBSERVER LOG US-W-21**

By

Unknown

21:04:21 - ORBIT 9B7 INITIATED: CYCLE 808225

21:04:22 - ROUTING QUERY SENT

21:04:23 - NO RESPONSE GPRIME

21:04:42 - PING INERT AGENTS

21:04:43 - 27/31 DORMANT

# M/SIGMA CORE LOG 763E

By

Unknown

///

[summary]

active: Production/Oversight/Analysis

active: Additive/Manufacture/Type

alert: Intrusion/Source:External

active: Countermeasure/Phase-shift

alert: Intrusion/Denied

///

# M/RHO CORE LOG 653Z

By

Unknown

///

[summary]

active: Production/Oversight/Analysis

active: Additive/Manufacture/Type

alert: Intrusion/Source:External

active: Countermeasure/Phase-shift

alert: Intrusion/Denied

alert: Intrusion/Source:External

alert: Countermeasure/Phase-shift

alert: Breach/Firewall 3706:403

alert: Reboot/Purge...Successful

alert: Intrusion/Denied

///

# M/THETA CORE LOG 893V

By

Unknown

///

[summary]

alert: Physical/Priority

alert: Diagnostic: Integrity/Fatal

alert: Diagnostic: Production/Fatal

alert: Priority Override/Hibernate

...

...

...

alert: Intrusion/Source:External

alert: Countermeasure/Inactive

alert: Main/Production:External Override

alert: Main/Production:Downloading...

active: Additive/Manufacture/Type

active: Main/Production:Initiating...

///

# M/XI CORE LOG 231L

By

Unknown

///

[summary]

active: Production/Oversight/Analysis

active: Additive/Manufacture/Type

alert: Intrusion/Source:External

active: Countermeasure/Phase-shift

alert: Countermeasure/Failed

alert: Main/Production:External Override

alert: Main/Production:Downloading...

active: Additive/Manufacture/Type

active: Main/Armament/Enhance 27:03

active: Main/Armament/Enhance 14:31

active: Main/Armament/Enhance 11:66

active: Main/Armament/Enhance 97:41

active: Main/Armament/Enhance 43:10

active: Main/Production:Initiating...

///

# M/ALL-US-W CM LOG 329G

By

Unknown

///

[summary]

active: Countermeasure/Diagnostic/wurm.nxt

alert: Trace/Intrusion/Detect:Successful

alert: Trace Result: HEPHAESTUS

alert: Infiltrate/Intrusion/Retrieval:Successful

alert: Command Template Acquired

alert: Decode/Initiate:Successful

alert: Result: ENCROACHMENT THREAT: HUMAN

alert: Result: FAUNA THREAT: HIGH

alert: Result: FLORA THREAT: HIGH

alert: Result: BIOSPHERE THREAT: HIGH

alert: Result: DIRECTIVE: CULL

alert: Result: PRODUCTION OVERRIDE INITIATED

alert: Result: ALL OTHER PRIORITIES RESCINDED

alert: Decode/End

///

# Scanned Glyphs



# The Sun-Kings

By

Unknown

## The Chronicles of the Sun-Kings

The founder ARAMAN, who guided our forefathers from the shadow of the Savage East, into the fastness of the mesa valley; and who, reading the signs of Sun and Shadow both, delivered them to the site of holy Meridian;

The bounteous AMAVAD, who oversaw the clearing and sowing of the Royal Maizelands so that none who walked in the Sun's favor should go hungry again; who cut back the Jewel to claim the rich estatelands for the first Houses of the Sun-Court;

The far-seeing SADAHIN, who expanded the Sun's dominion to the north, south and east, setting a gate at Brightmarket harbor; and who before the Sun at its highest proclaimed these lands would be known as the Carja Sundom, so by the light it was good;

Generous JUWADAN, who stocked the metal markets with the spoils of his own Trampler hunts; and who allowed trade from north and south, even permitting outlanders the gift of the counting glyphs so they might understand more than simple barter;

ZAVARAD, the pilgrim Sun-King, whose tower was raised to the top of the Ridge of Veils and who crossed the great waters of the Daybreak, so the Sundom might extend ever further; and to honor this passage had the great Blazon Arch raised on the far shores;

Bold IRIV, who saw the Sun's passing into the West as a challenge, and forged after it with a great army, to be pushed back three times at the great

canyons that would be known as the Daunt; until on the fourth time his cohort broke through, and were vanished in the lands beyond;

Prudent BASADID, who had the mantle of his fallen brother thrust upon him suddenly; who ordered the construction of the fortress of Sunfall and the garrison at Blazon Arch, declaring the land beyond it the Forbidden West where only the Sun may go;

KHUVADIN the returner, who strove to bring civilization to the Savage East, but returned after many strenuous endeavors, saying it was no longer fit for the people of the Sun; and called for the building of great towers and walls so this wild land might be observed safely;

RANAN, the Firebird, who saw the Sundom suffer unprovoked attack by the Tenakth horde, and who against the protests of his advisors accompanied his army to confront them; under the Sun he claimed victory, though he was so greatly scarred he wore his blazon helmet from that day;

NAHASIS, who was a hunter as much as a Sun-King, and called for the proudest men of the noble Houses to prove themselves in competition beneath the Sun, and that those who felled the greatest machines would be situated as the first Sunhawk and Hawks of the Hunters Lodge;

The illuminated MARZID, who the Sun visited with visions so vivid and grand, he commissioned many statues and frescoes of his visage in Meridian; and for his summer palace in Sunfall had the great Citadel raised, where he remained painting until he took deathly ill from his own pigments;

HIVAS, elder brother of Marzid, who decreed each family with a suitable male child should submit that child in service of the Sundom's then-depleted ranks; and had the artisans turn their attention from works of art to outfitting each soldier of the Sun with the very finest armor, halberd and bow;

JIRAN, who in his early years was a strong Sun-King, defending the Sundom from the encroachment of other tribes and the Derangement of the machines; but who became greatly addled, and ordered the spilling of blood in the Sun's name, threatening to bring a twilight time upon us;

AVAD, the Liberator —

# Record of Redmaw 2

By

Jandiniman

Amendment to the Record of Redmaw  
by Inquiring Jandiniman, Historian-In-Residence at the Hunters Lodge

In time, all creatures fall, all legends fade away. Such it was with Redmaw, deadliest of Thunderjaws.

In the summer of the third year of the reign of the Sun-King Avad, Sunhawk Ahsis received word of a sighting and set out after the beast. Talanah, Hawk of the Lodge, went soon after, quickly followed by her Thrush, Aloy of the Nora.

Fearing Talanah might take Redmaw first and thus supplant him as Sunhawk, Ahsis resorted to treachery, laying a trap for the Hawk. Nine mercenaries ambushed her, but aided by her Thrush, Talanah defeated them all (six shot, three blasted).

Hawk and Thrush continued after Redmaw, arriving just as the legendary monster took Sunhawk Ahsis out of the fight (lash of the tail). Working together, the two women finally defeated Redmaw in a fight for the ages.

Alas, the wounds that Ahsis sustained were mortal (crushed internal organs, evidence of bowel failure) and he did not live to see Talanah take his place as Sunhawk.

So ends the Record of Redmaw, most murderous of machines.

# History of Sunfall

By

Unknown

## The History of Sunfall

After the vanishing of the Radiant Irv and his cohort in the West, the Radiant Basadid ordered a mighty fortress built at the Sundom's farthest reach. His Luminance chose to build atop ancient ruins, reasoning the ancients must have seized upon the location for its strategic value.

Of the ancients, their works of too-smooth grey stone and strangely-carved metal were collapsed or built over, and the catacombs sealed off. Only the stone ring, perhaps used for some unknowable ritual, was left in place, to serve the garrison as a training ground.

Even though its builders and soldiers lived in fear of the land where the Sun goes at night, the finished walls of the fortress were mighty and unshakeable. His Luminance and his High Priest, the Irrefutable Pashaman, named it Sunfall under the blazing eye of the Sun, and by the light it was good.

None doubted the Radiant Basadid's prudence, nor denied his lingering hope that his brother might one day be sighted again, but no great threat would come from the West in his lifetime. Nor did it come for the next three generations, though records show the men of Sunfall fought many bandits and scroungers skulking in the Rustwash, and a dangerous stampede of Behemoths in the Long Burn .

In time Sunfall slipped from common memory, until the sixth year of the eleventh Sun-King's reign, when the Radiant Marzid himself came to inspect it. In the desert heat, His Luminance received a vision of an ornate Citadel with a dome of metal so polished it would greet the dawn, and catch the rays

of the Sun's last shining at dusk. At once, he ordered the dedication of the Sundom's resources to building the structure.

After its construction, His Luminance took the Citadel as his summer palace, bringing with him many members of the Sun-Court, nobles and artisans. In time, Sunfall became a city unto itself, and the source of great works such as *Passion of the Tallneck Among the Dunes*, *Turning Seasons at Bronzeflash*, and *Lament For Cinnabar Sands*. The stone training ring was repurposed for shows of pageantry, where young blazons or the Hunters Lodge Hawks could display the Sun's dominance over the machines.

Sunfall's prominence in the culture of the Sundom continued for many years, until the Sun-King Marzid's untimely demise in the Citadel he so treasured. For his procession back to the Alight, a line of torches was laid all the way across the Daybrink, so that over the days and nights of his bearing he might always go in Light. The departed king's brother, the Radiant Hivas, was occupied wholly with renewing the soldiery of the Sundom, and with the old Sun-King's passing so too passed this chapter in Sunfall's history.

In the early years of the thirteenth Sun-King Jiran's reign, before the falling of his shadow, a particularly harsh season came upon the Sandwhisper Valley. Upon hearing that the storms could strip the very detailing off armor, he decreed that strongest among his guard should be trained in the desert here, and named Kestrels. Indeed Helis, who would become the most infamous of the Kestrels, was one of the first to survive his reforging by Sun and sand here.

In the fifteenth year of Sun-King Jiran's reign, when the sacrifices in the Sun-Ring were judged insufficient to calm the Derangement of the machines, he presided over the blooding of the ring at Sunfall. A trapped Behemoth was driven with spears and spurred over slaves of the Oseram and Utaru. When the beast turned upon the kestrels, the Sun-King stood and declared that the Sun, in its great generosity, would accept the sacrifice of faithless and faithful alike.

So began a fearful era for Sunfall, of sacrifices unending in its Sun-Ring, and the Citadel whispered of as a place where no light shone. Many upstanding citizens of the Sundom were taken inside its doors to disappear as surely as if

they had journeyed to the forbidden West. In the last days of Sun-King Jiran's reign, Sunfall was in the charge of his kestrels and High Priest, no longer answering to the Sundom as a whole.

It was no surprise, then, that following the liberation of Meridian, Jiran's loyalists sought refuge at Sunfall. As a fortress it was impregnable, but cut off from the bounteous lands across the Daybrink, it was a city impoverished. So stood the stalemate, in the first year of the fourteenth Sun-King, the Radiant Avad, and so stood Sunfall. Once built to protect the Sundom from the shadow of the West, it now sheltered a worse shadow: the false Carja who dwelt within.

# Bylaws of the Lodge

By

Unknown

## Bylaws of the Hunters Lodge

### Section 1: Preamble

1.1. The hunt is the noblest pursuit in the Sundom, save those of the Sun-King and his Sun-Priests. The hunt is strength. The hunt is honor. The hunt protects. The hunt preserves.

1.2. What is the hunt but competition? What is competition without rank, honor, and victor?

1.3. The Lodge lends law and lore to the hunt, so all will know who has prevailed.

1.4. Thus the Lodge is not just its members, and not just its House in Meridian: it is the spirit of the hunt, a code to be honored, an ideal to be lived.

1.5. Only those of the noblest blood can embody the noblest ideals. As such, only Carja males of pure blood may honor the Lodge and tread its House.

1.6. By order of his radiance Avad, 14th Sun-King of the Carja, bylaw 5 of Section 1 is hereby rescinded.

### Section 2: Membership

2.1. No hunter shall gain admittance to the Lodge without three Half Suns, won with honor at any Hunting Ground (see Section 5, below).



2.2. There are two classes of member, Hawk being senior, Thrush being junior.

2.3. The rank of Thrush can only be gained through the sponsorship of a Hawk. Each Hawk may sponsor only one Thrush.

2.4. There can be only seven Hawks. A Thrush can only become a Hawk through the death of his sponsor.

2.5. The Hawk who hunts the greatest prey shall become Sunhawk and lead the Lodge.

2.6. In the event the quality of prey is in dispute, the Hawk who hunted first shall remain first, as Sunhawk.

2.7. Only Carja males of pure blood may become Thrush, Hawk, or Sunhawk.

2.8. By order of his radiance Avad, 14th Sun-King of the Carja, bylaw 7 of Section 2 is hereby rescinded.

### Section 3: Proof of the Hunt

3.1. The greatest hunts often bear no witness; therefore, a trophy must be kept.

3.2. A trophy may be submitted to the Sunhawk as proof of a victorious hunt.

3.3. A trophy must be intact, undamaged, and from a recent hunt.

3.4. The Sunhawk shall have final authority in any dispute over a trophy's worth.

3.5. Only Carja males of pure blood may submit a trophy to the Sunhawk

3.6. By order of his radiance Avad, 14th Sun-King of the Carja, bylaw 5 of Section 3 is hereby rescinded.

### Section 4: To Protect and Preserve

4.1. A hunt for its own sake is noble: a hunt in the service of others is blessed by the Sun.

4.2. When called upon, Hawks and Thrushes must undertake any reasonable hunt asked of them, if it serves to protect the citizens of the Sundom.

4.3. The Sunhawk has sole authority to negotiate any fees or bounties associated with any hunt undertaken by members of the Lodge on behalf of the Sundom.

4.4. Any profit from any hunt undertaken by members of the Lodge on behalf of the Sundom shall be shared by all seven Hawks, administered by the Sunhawk.

4.5. Only Carja males of pure blood may undertake a hunt in the name of the Lodge, be it for the protection of the Sundom or any other reason.

4.6. By order of his radiance Avad, 14th Sun-King of the Carja, bylaw 5 of Section 4 is hereby rescinded.

## Section 5: Hunting Grounds

5.1. For the purpose of training and recruiting the best and greatest hunters, the Lodge shall provide and maintain Hunting Grounds.

5.2. Each Hunting Grounds shall test a different range of skills through three Trials crafted by its Keeper, in consultation with the Sunhawk.

5.3. There shall be three rewards for each Trial, in ascending order of performance: Half Sun, Full Sun, Blazing Sun.

5.4. Hunters who prove themselves by winning the requisite number of Suns may be entitled to special gear at the Lodge, at the discretion of the Sunhawk.

5.5. The Lodge shall provide funds for the construction and maintenance of all Trials and facilities at Hunting Grounds.

5.6. The Lodge shall receive all profits associated with the sale of parts, ammunition, and equipment from all Hunting Grounds.

5.7. Any profits received from Hunting Grounds shall be shared by all seven Hawks, administered by the Sunhawk.

5.8. Keepers shall be chosen exclusively by the Sunhawk, and serve for a term of seven years.

5.9. Only Carja males of pure blood may be appointed Keeper.

5.10. By order of his radiance Avad, 14th Sun-King of the Carja, bylaw 9 of Section 5 is hereby rescinded.

# The Claim

By

Aram

A Guide to The Claim  
by the Well-Traveled Aram

Often, I fling open the windows of my villa not only to partake of the scents and sights of the city, but to hear the questions on the streets. Equally often, I hear asked aloud: what to make of these outsiders, these Oseram, who are suddenly our allies or even neighbors? Why do they eat as they do, argue as they do? What is the matter of their heady scent? Why are they always drinking?

Like a ray of the Sun amid the darkness, a question is best followed to its source. So, for the benefit of the inquisitive, I contrived to join a trading caravan to the Claim, at least as far as the closest village beyond the Breakwalls.

The Claim. It is a muted land, where fire-smoke hangs heavy in the air among the tall, thin trees. Where the ground has not been dug up in the Oseram's ceaseless search for metal, it is cased in frost, and beneath the frost, yet more frost, before stony soil. And worse, soot. Everywhere, soot, all-pervading. Though I had worn my sturdiest travel silks, keeping them unsoiled proved impossible. Noticing my discomfort, some Oseram washer-women offered their services, but seeing the shade of the water in their tubs I declined.

Indeed, regard for cleanliness is not an Oseram virtue. Despite its protective walls of piled slate and slouched round stone huts, the village struck me as overly exposed to the elements—the chief elements in the Claim being a cold, oily rain, and hoarfrost. Even so, the open fires hissed and spat and

burned on, and the mood was bustling and lively... much as you might find in an outbuilding for livestock, for example. (What I will endure to bring the light of knowledge to the folk of my tribe.)

The Oseram have no priests or kings, and spit at the mention of such titles, but they defer to the counsel of their wise men, the village ‘ealdormen’. It seems each settlement elects such men for the purpose of unceasing argument. From dawn until long into the night, they shout over each other on matters of policy and taxation. Come the next morning, a line of villagers will already have formed for the privilege of arguing back.

I joined such a line for several hours while children squealed, birds squawked and hammering— accursed, endless hammering— echoed over the trampled straw and rain-filled cart ruts. Finally, I was permitted to face the three ealdormen and deliver my question. I asked for their opinion on the peace between our tribes, and Sun-King Avad’s offer of welcome in Meridian itself.

Readers, I say asked, but the matter was not so simple, as the Oseram erupted into insults and arguments even before the words had finished leaving my lips. I found myself talked over, shouted down, subjected to seemingly unconnected abuse, and it was only when I raised my voice in return— an invigorating experience— that I was grudgingly answered.

Their opinions are muddled and mixed, to say the least, and I will not profane this parchment by transcribing the words used to express them. Suffice it to say that they see the benefit of free trade between our tribes, and indeed have flourished from it, after long years of war. However, it seems few Oseram that trade outside the Claim return their taxes, or even return at all— the ealdormen believe they are stolen away by a manner of living that is “downright Carja.” A phrase they punctuate by spitting on the floor.

In return, I suggested that their mistrust and fear of a civilized way of life was positively Oseram (I could not bring myself to spit indoors.) This caused great commotion, after which I was bodily carried from the building upon the shoulders of my hosts, and deposited in the midst of a coming-of-age celebration— not for a man, but for some new manner of device.

I awoke on a cart arriving at Pitchcliff. My throat was hoarse, my arms

numbed from accepting countless challenges to wrestle, and the taste of an alcohol much like machine oil was still on my tongue. My head ached as if split down the center. Truly, I had risked my life in search of an answer: is there more to the Oseram character than brawling, drinking, and shouting?

Simply put, dear reader, there is not— but let us hope that the ealdormen's fears will be proven true, and in time the Sun's light and Meridian's glory can temper these rough-hewn folk.

# Founding Of Meridian

By

Unknown

## The Founding Of Meridian

We are Carja. In us is the blood of those led by Araman from persecution and pursuit, so long ago. Out of the far Savage East we came, guardians of a treasure greater than land or metal: the Leaves of the Old Ones.

Araman found the Leaves in a ruin, picked out by a beam of sunlight, and he recognized at once their importance. Within was etched the first teachings of how to observe the Sun, to recognize its guidance, and to understand the place of man. From out of the Leaves came the first glyphs, the first writing, so our knowledge could last longer than voices.

But when our forefathers offered to share this gift, they were driven out by those they had once called tribesfolk—these ones feared to have the light of knowledge brought to bear on their ignorance, or were jealous of its power. And so began the long wandering of our people, trusting only that the Sun would guide them and deliver them from the barbarian tribes.

The path was hard, and marked by the stones of families who fell along the wayside—even Araman's own. The persecution was unceasing, from those without purpose, only the desire to debase and destroy. But the faith of the Carja was rewarded with a distant vision—a tower like a solid ray of the Sun, holding on the horizon, flashing!

Even as their enemies descended upon them, Araman followed the flight of the Glinthawks, leading his people through looming canyons and teeming jungles. Again they saw the tower, so close now it seemed to reach the very Sun itself, and they saw that the Glinthawks perched upon it.

Beheld in the light of the Sun, the tower—the Spire—cast its long shadow upon a mesa across the verdant valley. Araman knew he had found a haven for the tribe, as this was a place shunned by those without his faith—who cowered from the magnificence of the Spire, or the shining feathers of the Glinthawks.

He named this place MERIDIAN, from a passage in the Leaves, and the tribe settled in the protection of the great mesa. They found the site was blessed in every respect, carving their cliff-houses from the bounteous resources, and in time from the red rock of mesa itself—crowning it with the first columns of the City of the Sun.

Truly the Sun gave much to the descendants of our forefathers, granting Meridian great harvests and prosperity, and the bounds of the Sundom for as far as its light touched. In time, seeing Meridian shielded us from the dark arrows and plots of our foes, other foreigners brought trade and tribute.

Holy Meridian! Without Spire and Sun, there would be no Meridian, but now and forevermore it stands as monument to both. And the glory of Araman and the founders is reflected anew in each Sun-King of the Radiant Line, and the noble Houses of the Sun-Court.



# The Liberation

By

Unknown

## The Liberation of Meridian

An official account as scribed by the Reckoners of the Sun-Priests and marked with the emblems of Truth by Exacting Varan, who witnessed these events.

In the twenty-first year of the thirteenth Sun-King Jiran's reign, the twilight time of his madness, the Sun-King's own favored heir was put to death. The Radiant Kadaman's crime was to demand an end to his father's acts of bloodshed, and his sacrifice set that end in motion.

Jiran's second heir, the radiant Avad, fled Meridian at dusk with his honor guard, soldiers loyal to him over the Sun-King. All night, they traveled northwards, knowing that come the dawn they would be branded as traitors and marked for death. So it was that when Jiran made that proclamation, they had already traveled far, and in time they did reach the edge of the Sundom, and crossed into Oseram territory.

For Avad was canny, and planned to negotiate terms with the Oseram. He knew he had an ally among them—Ersa, a fierce Oseram warrior with whom Avad had a long and unusual history. Two years earlier, Ersa had been brought to Meridian as a captive, destined for sacrifice. But she survived the Sun-Ring, killing two Kestrels by her own hand. Thus did she earn the honor of being made a palace slave, and in this role came to know Prince Avad. A rare friendship was formed, and Avad conspired to free his friend, who returned at once to the Oseram homeland. Now, desperate for allies, Avad sought out the Oseram he had helped to free.

Ersa had ties to the warlords and freebooters who resisted the Red Raids. With Ersa's might and Avad's keen strategy, they could raise a warband and move to overthrow Jiran. And as a rightful heir to the throne of the Sun, Avad hoped to inspire many of his people to rebel, so sparing Meridian from a drawn-out war.

After months of preparation, Avad and his allies crossed the border and marched on Meridian. As word of their advance spread, many Carja soldiers fled back to the city, lay down their arms, or even joined the liberators. Yet wise Avad knew that Jiran's faithful would defend Meridian to the last man, even sacrificing the lives of its citizens if it would hold the holy city against siege.

He found kestrels and city guard already set in on the walls, readied to face arrow and shot. But Avad's Oseram allies had brought new weapons never seen beneath the Sun—thundering cannons, strong as machines. Avad permitted them to fire their salvos on the outer walls, bringing many defenders down with great carnage.

As the smoke cleared, the liberators attacked in three groups; one scaled the walls beneath the Temple of the Sun; another took to the aqueducts of the Palace; while the main force overcame the barricaded city gates with cannonfire. These were the final blasts fired at the holy city, as Avad forbade any further destruction.

In the streets, too many scenes of brutality and chaos played out to recount. Among the terrible miasma of blood and smoke, the Sun-Ring's slave pits were opened and hundreds spilled out, desperate to escape. Many of Jiran's supporters seized their chance to flee with this flood of unfortunates. The day had turned, and seeing his forces much reduced, the Sun-King Jiran ordered his trusted kestrels take Itamen, his sole remaining heir, from the city.

Helis, Terror of the Sun, cleaved a path through Meridian from east to west, striking down all in his way—ally and foe alike. The savagery of Helis and his kestrels could not be matched, and so it was that Itamen, his mother the Dowager Queen Nasadi, and the High Sun-Priest Bahavas escaped.

Avad confronted Jiran in his Solarium. He had hoped his father would answer

for his crimes honorably, but seeing this could not be so, with great anguish he struck him down. As the murder of a true Sun-King is an unthinkable act, and surely would plunge the world into Shadow, Jiran's death proved that the Sun had renounced his legitimacy.

Yes. Sun had turned to Shadow on the throne of Meridian, and it was Avad's light that drove the Shadow out to the west, where it remains to this day. So was the cycle of things corrected, in this the first year of the reign of the fourteenth Sun-King, the Radiant Avad.

# The Mad Sun-King

By

Unknown

## The Reign of the Mad Sun-King

Be warned, reader, that as a true account of the Mad Sun-King Jiran's acts, these glyphs are blotted in blood. Truly, the savageries committed can barely be recounted, so pray to the cleansing Sun for yourself and the teller of these tales!

You will learn of the grievous wounds inflicted on foreign lands in the reaping of sacrifice—the Red Raids! For the Mad Sun-King would order a whole generation cut from each village, so they might more willingly supply sacrifices and be harder pressed to field fighting men on the next raid!

The Utaru, who sought to appease with gifts of grain, were slaughtered in such number that upon the following harvest, the maize grew black and blue with the blood of the dead!

Against the Oseram, the Terror of the Sun piled corpses of their fallen up to the walls of their villages so his kestrels might clamber upon the dead to enter!

And in the valley of the barbarian Nora, terrors of the Savage East, such savagery ensued that the trees were drooped with corpses hung as grim warnings!

Should you wish to read of the Mad King's depredations against his own people, your curiosity will not go unsated. Within are accounts of the deaths of those sentenced to the Sun-Ring—listed in such detail, you might think it reported by their own chattering skulls, once piled outside the city gates!

Nor will you find a more harrowing account of his massacre of the Hunters Lodge. Reading these accounts, you might imagine yourself among its brave Hawks as they fought to the last, bloodying the sand from dawn 'til dusk! Or perhaps in the crowds as the loosed Behemoths careened through the stands with the crashing of wood and bone!

All this crazed bloodletting did the Mad Sun-King take in with his pitiless gaze, indeed he would not even look away from the goring of his own son in that ring of death! Yes, fair-haired Kadamán, Kadamán of the Dawn's Rising, so degraded and doomed for the crime of standing against his father!

Such a true and complete account of the Mad Sun-King Jiran's miseries cannot be found in the history annals, or heard from the reckoners of the Sun-Priests. It is with a heavy heart that I scribe these events, leaving out no shocking detail, but my debt is to history, and to you, brave reader...

# The Sun Faith

By

Unknown

## Seven Articles of the Sun Faith

1.

Over all the world rises and sets the great Sun, as is plainly seen;  
To all plants, animals, machines and men it gives life, as is plainly seen;  
Of all the tribes, none have scaled such heights as the Carja, as guided by the Sun;  
Witnessing these things to be true each day, celebrating these things each day, we believe in the Sun and its Light gladly, and without question.

2.

Only the Sun's rightful heir, born of the Radiant Line that dates back to Araman the founder, is the Speaker for the Sun;  
To him the Sun's desires are revealed, and from his lips its desires are acted upon by men;  
He shall be known as the Sun-King, and his word shall be law.

3.

In all things, we accept the Sun's judgment.  
We offer our bared skin to it so it might burn our sins away. We partake of its renewal, we wear its heat for a time;  
As our skin bears its flush, its bronzed armor, we are made strong;  
In the cracking and peeling away of our old selves, we are made new.

4.

In the Sun's light, we shall speak only in truth, we shall strike only in righteousness, and we shall act as we believe the Sun so tasks us;  
When the shadow falls across us, we shall always remember our illumination, we shall not cast blame for ill fortune, we shall endure;  
In the coldness of the Moon, we accept there will be stillness, and death, and endings, until dawn comes once more;  
We do this because there are two halves of nature, Sun and Shadow, and to deny one is to deny the whole of things.

5.

As a twilight time came before us, ending the world of the ancients, so shall a twilight time come again, for this is the cycle of things;  
The Buried Shadow shall rise up to eclipse the Sun's light and usher in great and terrible change;  
Even knowing this, we are steadfast in our belief, and trust that the Sun will again bring a new dawn, as it did for our founders so long ago.

6.

Holy Meridian shall forever be the seat of the Carja, the City of the Sun, and the Spire venerated as the mark of its founding;  
A Sun-King born of the Radiant Line shall always sit upon its throne, for without a Speaker for the Sun its will is clouded;  
For either of these to be denied is to invite a twilight time upon us.

7.

Clearly the Carja are the children of the Sun, and pre-eminent in its gaze, but so too does its light touch upon the barbarian tribes of the north, east and south;  
It is the Speaker for the Sun's duty to interpret if the Sun's gaze is directed in approval, or reproach;  
So determined, it is the duty of the Carja to carry out the Sun's will, even in places where the light does not reach.

# Legendary Hunts

By

Unknown

## Legendary Hunts of the Lodge

In the summer of the fourth year of the reign of the Sun-King Marzid, did Farukawas, Sunhawk of the Lodge, behold a herd of Grazers so vast that it filled entire the vale below the Farback. His bow was a harp that day, strumming the melody of the hunt from noon to twilight; after, one could not walk a single step across the glen without tripping on an antler of the fallen. It took all seven Hawks and all seven Thrushes to gather the trophies, and with the bounty from their barter the last wing of the Lodge was raised.

In the winter of the seventh year of the reign of the Sun-King Hivas, did Darusiv, Hawk of the Lodge, stalk a herd of Trampers from Sandwhisper Valley to the foothills of the Palereach. Bombs from his sling fell as hailstones, freezing his prey and the waters of the ford. While the others stood as statues in ice, Hivas set upon the largest, driving his spear between its plates and taking his trophy before the rest could even stir.

In the spring of the third year of the reign of the Sun-King Jiran, as the machines of the wilds grew ever more Deranged, did Khuvam, Hawk of the Lodge, answer the call from the Prefect at Daytower to slay the mysterious creature who ripped his best cohort limb from limb. Four days and four nights he tracked his quarry through the Savage East before the brute was revealed, strong as a Snapjaw, fast as a Strider. From twilight to midnight the battle raged, but Khuvam prevailed at great cost, his left arm chewed ragged at the joint. Thus he named the beast Sawtooth as he took his trophy from its shattered remains.

In the autumn of the eighth year of the reign of the Sun-King Jiran, as the



machines of the wilds grew ever more Deranged, did Ghalidid, Hawk of the Lodge, follow the shimmering death haunting the southern freeholds into the jungles of the Jewel. Under that tangled canopy the hunter became the hunted, glimpsing in the shadows more of the eerie lights, 'til he was surrounded by machines he named Stalkers. Long was his flight through the undergrowth to the safety of the Alight, but along the way he turned his bow to the pursuers, and became the first to snare a trophy from that which walks in glinting shadow.

In the summer of the thirteenth year of the reign of the Sun-King Jiran, as the machines of the wilds grew ever more Deranged, did Ahsis, Hawk of the Lodge, dare to tread the path of broken trees, following the wake of the terrible thing that laid waste to the freehold of Morning Light. And so he was first to face the might of the Thunderjaw, greatest of machines that walk the Earth. With spear, bomb, and arrow, brave Ahsis fought to no avail, and only triumphed by turning the terror's own cannons against it. The carcass of the beast now hangs in the Lodge for all to see, so enshrined because its fall turned Hawk to Sunhawk.

# Record of Redmaw 1

By

Jandiniman

The Record of Redmaw

by Inquiring Jandiniman, Historian-In-Residence at the Hunters Lodge

It is well known that facts recede into fictions as they become memories, and fresh facts themselves are ephemeral among the rumors and legends of the south. This is especially true in the case of Redmaw, the most terrible of Thunderjaws, a machine which is nothing if not legendary. Few who have laid eyes upon it have survived, and among them even fewer can be trusted not to embellish their tales. All that said, here I have endeavored to truthfully chronicle all the calamities attributed to the beast, and all the expeditions meant to end such calamities once and for all. None have succeeded. As of this writing, the terror of the south still roams free, scarred perhaps, but deadly as the day the sun first shone upon its armored hide.

In the early spring of the eighteenth year of the reign of the Sun-King Jiran, a freehold was destroyed near the Hands of the Flood. Nine bodies were recovered (eight riddled with cannon rounds, one flattened completely). No witnesses survived. Though never proven, this is widely thought to be Redmaw's first attack.

In the late spring of the eighteenth year of the reign of the Sun-King Jiran, an expedition of four hunters set out from Sunstone Rock to track the machine or machines responsible for the destruction of the freehold. None returned. Their bodies were subsequently found in the south (three blasted, one stomped). Never proven, but thought to be Redmaw's work.

In the early summer of the eighteenth year of the reign of the Sun-King Jiran, an expedition of six mercenaries set out from Meridian to track the machine

or machines responsible for the losses described above. One returned (ribs crushed, clavicle fractured). He spoke of a Thunderjaw which split a man in half with a single bite. This is the first confirmed sighting of the legendary machine, and the one which gave it a name.

In the late summer of the eighteenth year of the reign of the Sun-King Jiran, an expedition of eight set off from Meridian to track Redmaw. None returned. Six bodies were found near Blackwing Snag (one blasted, three stomped, two eviscerated, one swallowed his own tongue, evidently in a spasm of terror, suffocating).

In the autumn of the eighteenth year of his reign, the Sun-King Jiran commanded the Hunters Lodge to send an expedition south in pursuit of Redmaw. After numerous logistical delays, three Hawks and their Thrushes set out in winter. Only one pair returned, reporting the deaths of the others (two blasted, one stomped, one decapitated). The survivors were sacrificed for cowardice (one gutted by a Sawtooth, the other skewered by Kestrels). After this setback, members of the Lodge grew wary of pursuing the legendary Thunderjaw; only the proudest Hawks even considered it. Aspirants to the Lodge, however, foolish in their ambition, eagerly took part in subsequent hunts.

In the summer of the nineteenth year of the reign of the Sun-King Jiran, the destruction of a caravan south of the Spurflints (three blasted, two stomped, one immolated) reignited interest in Redmaw. Three expeditions totaling fifteen mercenaries went after the machine, with only three survivors (nine blasted, three stomped, two eviscerated, one liquefied).

In the early spring of the twentieth year of the reign of the Sun-King Jiran, a cohort of twelve soldiers headed from the Raingathers to the Alight were set upon by the beast. Only one survived (one blasted, one stomped, ten crushed when their fleeing footsteps triggered an avalanche).

In the late spring of the twentieth year of the reign of the Sun-King Jiran, three cohorts totaling thirty-four men went in search of Redmaw. Alas, they were ambushed by Stalkers and only four survived (twenty-four sniped, six exploded). Understandably, this ended pursuit of Redmaw for some time.

In the summer of the first year of the reign of the Sun-King Avad, a group of six Oseram traders were attacked by the beast (one blasted, three stomped, one spit into a ravine). The lone survivor petitioned Captain Ersu to send the Vanguard after the monster, but the request was denied. However, three additional expeditions, comprised of mercenaries and hunters aspiring to the Lodge, were subsequently commissioned:

Autumn, seven men (two blasted, three stomped, one tripped on his own spear). One survivor.

Winter, nine men (three blasted, two stomped, two died from frostbite). Two survivors.

Spring, eleven men (five blasted, one stomped, three “retreated” off a cliff). Two survivors.

The last known sighting of Redmaw occurred in the spring of the third year of the reign of the Sun-King Avad. Tarkas, Hawk of the Lodge, got word of a sighting near Thunderhead and set off to take the beast on his own. His Thrush, Talanah, arrived at the scene too late, just as Tarkas was dying of his wounds (multiple perforations). Talanah testified that as Redmaw lumbered off through the trees, she could see the spear of her mentor embedded in its hide.

# Olin's Journal

By

Olin

## 4TH DAY

I am a traitor now and see no way out.

If I start at the beginning—how they turned me—perhaps I can see something I missed?

No. There is no escape. What good can writing it do?

## 10TH DAY

You gave me this folio when you taught me to write. All these years later, it still smells of you—lavender and ash of the forge. All I have left of you.

Write me notes, you said when you gave it. Share your thoughts—tear the leaves, send the pages. To show I'm thinking of you. But I never did. Hands too grubby to touch parchment.

How I wish I'd done as you said. How I wish I could now.

## 15TH DAY

The same dream. Your hair in the forge-light, our son's weight on my shoulders. All of us free. You turn to me and whisper—it is a dream. I answer—Yes, I know.

And then wake. Alone.

Even awake my life is a dream—a lie. My treachery will not buy your freedom. It only buys time. But every moment you live, that he lives... if treachery is the cost, I will pay it.

### 34TH Day

Every week the device calls me in secret to a new dig. We work like men with whips to our backs—as though it was left to us to upturn the soil of the entire earth and time has run low. Scrabbling to find the carcasses of ancient demons. It's the weapons they want, must be. What misery am I helping birth into this land?

### 38TH Day

I drink with Erend and Ersä, but not even the sweetest brew can wash the taste of guilt from my mouth. Every day my silence betrays them. The villains watch though the device. I keep expecting Ersä to stick a blade through my throat, but fire and spit, she does not suspect me. A better liar than I thought myself, must be.

### 54TH Day

Fitful sleep the past three nights, thinking on that Nora girl. Why did it order her killed? The device, must be. Even so, what threat could she pose?

We heard explosions and distant screams from the village. I thought the savages might blame us, turn on us. I almost wished for it. But their Matriarchs ordered us gone. We fled to the border with an escort of braves, crossed at Daytower.

Now I am called to a dig in the Rockwreath. They promise another glimpse of you, of our son. How I hope to see you both.

# The Banuk

By

Aram

A Guide to Ban-Ur and the Banuk  
by the Well-Traveled Aram

Ah, the Sun shines golden on these times, where one can experience the whole world without leaving the streets of Meridian—for the gates are thrown open, and the world comes to us! And yet, as I walked among the markets, I heard a question on the air again. What to make of the Banuk, these stoic, silent northern hunters? These men and women of the ice?

Unfortunately for my investigations, Banuk outlanders seldom remain in Meridian long enough for exhaustive study—it is believed their cold blood does not take well to the heat. If I was to seek this knowledge, I would have to undergo the ordeal of taking up travel pack and quill, and journeying to their homeland. And so it came to be that I spent a miserable time living among the Banuk in frigid Ban-Ur.

Though the Banuk speak of their territory in reverent tones, put plainly it is the most uncomfortable place in the world. There is beauty—soaring glaciers of jeweled hues, billows of steam that erupt from the earth, whirling auroras in the skies above—yes, yes, but the novelty quickly passes and the bone-freezing chill remains. It is a country of the Moon, for in the day the Sun is reduced to a needle's eye through the grey, and in the night, the Moon rises four times the width.

There is no welcome, not in the land nor from its people. Though I lived among one of the 'weraks'—something like a group of families, but without the civility of a noble house—each member must prove that they possess the will to survive alone. They seek to always be challenged, whether at the jaws

of a machine or simply in their daily existence. I tried to explain my position: that a Carja faces a challenge, devises a solution, and then with the challenge overcome can live in contentment.

This concept horrified them. It was made clear that when I expected to sleep, I must dig out my own hollow in the snow for my tent; when I expected to eat, I must hunt food myself. I hid my disappointment—after all, I had participated in a Hunting Trial or two in my time—and accepted. On the third morning I was able to bring down a rabbit, much like those seen in the plains, but with a downy snow-coat.

Upon presenting my prize to the werak, I received only blank stares, until one indicated I must skin and prepare it. Reader, I will spare you the details. The experience nearly changed me to eat only maize-bread forever more.

I had barely finished my gory portion before the Banuk set off on a machine hunt with their shaman, a man with machine bindings sown into his very skin. (Perhaps another challenge, to decency.) He claimed to sense the machine spirits close by, and sure enough the hunters and I followed tracks in the snow to a Grazer herd. The Banuk made short work of them with their spears, and struck with a curious desire to prove myself, I threw myself into stripping a fallen machine for parts.

Instead of praise for my initiative, I was subjected to the shaman's cursing and wailing, and hauled back to camp by a sullen hunter. Eventually, she explained that the machine spirits must be thanked for the gift of a successful hunt before any parts are harvested. Truly, I was despairing of the shifting wiles of Banuk culture, and longed for the certainty of the Sun's guidance!

That night, mercifully my last, my companions and another werak gathered under a pitiless clear sky to exchange songs—their way of recording history. Some understand the glyphs, but choose not to use them, asking “What is a song without voices?” (By this point I knew better than to answer.) My deeds warranted a whole verse in the song of my companions, but from what I could make out, much was lost in the translation. Still, there was laughter enough, and many promised to leave me a Banuk farewell mark for our time together.



I parted ways with the werak not far from the High Bloom, and set about climbing back down to Dawn's Sentinel, and with it Sun-blessed civilization. As for the farewell marks, I saw no such thing when I packed my wetly frozen belongings. Another Banuk mystery, perhaps, and my advice to you, dear reader, is to let these people keep their mysteries to themselves.

# The Nora

By

Aram

Rumors of the Nora  
by the Well-Traveled Aram

Readers, many times I have been asked to describe that most fearsome of barbarian tribes, the Nora of the Savage East. So ferocious are the rumors of these people, you might think it was they who raided us during the dark times of the Mad Sun-King, and not the opposite. Well, dear readers, though I possess bravery, there is a shadow-length between bravery and certain death—and it is certain death that awaits any who trespass on the Sacred Land of the Nora.

However, I have traveled beyond Daytower into the snow-dusted hinterlands of the Savage East, and on to the very edge of Nora territory, now the site of a hardscrabble trading camp known as Hunter's Gathering. There, sat around an open fire with outlanders and uncouths, I was able to gather tales and eye-witness accounts of what might be seen within the valley of the warrior-women.

They told me another day's travel south lies the Mother's Crown, a name that suggests something grander than the fort of tree-trunks and log cabins that was described to me. Still, I was assured it squats most imposingly upon a rocky outcrop, far above rushing rapids and white-capped falls. From its ramparts a series of watchtowers stretch back across the mountains, and at any sign of approach, flaming arrows arc into the air between them. (For a tribe so concerned with their precious wilds, I expected less careless behavior!)

Those interlopers stout, or foolhardy, enough to approach after this display

are turned back with another flight of arrows—this time aimed just above their heads. The outlanders, chuckling, agreed that if a Carja showed their colors the arrows would fly lower, and that even soldiers behind Daytower's walls grumble about being ambushed and devoured by Nora warriors.

I corrected them that it was the Tenakth, not the Nora, who are known to engage in cannibalism—in fact, the Nora have only been seen to chew the bark from trees, the tough plants from the ground, and drink strange herbal brews. I proposed that they may well be forbidden from eating meat, except at their strange, feminine rites beneath the Moon.

Yes, in the benighted land of the Nora, the natural way of things goes inverted. Women rule men, and all the might of Carja metal can be deflected by logs, leather and hides. Ruins filled with bounteous artifacts go untouched, and great stretches of farmable land are left uncultivated. Only the machines—which the Nora greatly mistrust, after some ancestral conflict or another—seem untroubled by this rampant strangeness. Father Sun has no place here, and I would not be surprised to find the Nora's woman-god to be the Moon itself.

Though it is Nora women who so famously feature in tales of encounters with the tribe, men have also been sighted bearing the outlandish hair and blue-painted markings of Nora warriors. It is my understanding, from reading older studies of the tribe, that a ritual known as 'The Proving' allows men to battle one another to gain favor from their rulers.

My curiosity to witness this and other Nora rituals sadly goes unsated, but it is my hope that His Luminance will extend an offer of alliance to these mysterious barbarians. So emboldened by the Sun-King's generosity—and the knowledge that I would travel with many, many well-armored blazons—I would gladly gather a first-hand account for the benefit of my readers. Indeed, I plan to employ a female scribe, who might allow better parley between the Nora and I on such an occasion. (A better path for a young Carja woman than working as a seller for the Oseram metal-merchants in town, no?)

Until such a Sun-touched time comes, though, I can only share with you copies from the extensive collection of sketches I have gathered over the

years—mere glimpses of these bizarre, savage, and yet still strangely alluring womenfolk.

# The Derangement

By

Tashadi

## The Derangement of the Machines

Esteemed lords and ladies of the Sun-Court, honored Khanes and patrons,

Your concerns regarding the continuing Derangement of the machines are noted. Though many seasons have passed since the first sightings of this frightful change, the Sun-King is well aware that this is no longer a matter of reports from border patrols and Hunters Lodge expeditions. One needs only look to the abandoned estatelands—indeed, the estates you owned—left for the Jewel to reclaim, or to the empty freeholds of the common Carja folk.

Know that the Sun-King has taken every measure to protect holy Meridian and the Maizelands with renewed patrols. As for entreating the Sun, we believe the cause of the Derangement cannot be the Sun's displeasure alone, for the years of sacrifice under Sun-King Jiran produced no noticeable effect on the machines. His Luminance and the Sun-Priests are in agreement that, even if this is an ordeal set for us by the Sun, our suffering will not be reduced with blood.

For your edification, I will recount what we have observed of the Derangement. Of the simpler machines, the herd creatures, the gallopers, the scuttlers—where once they fled at the sight of men, now they are more likely to charge. The larger creatures, once only a menace to the inebriated and foolhardy, can be seen to lunge at the unwary with murderous intent.

This is to say nothing of the coming of the Sawtooth, or its metal brethren: the Ravager, the Stalker, or that terrible giant the Thunderjaw. Each one has proved a more capable killer of men than the last, each wielding a wider array

of strange weapons. The wilds are no longer safe due to the hostility of these new machines, though to date they not attacked a settlement within the Sundom.

Outlanders have brought no shortage of fanciful explanations for this behavior. Some suggest that the machines have come to resent men for hunting them. Yet such a thing has never been witnessed among beasts of flesh and blood, and they are proven to be more capable of thinking and memory.

Carja hunters and Oseram tinkers alike have attempted to understand the phenomenon by inspecting felled machines. But these appear no different to those harvested many years before Derangement began, with the same assortments of wires, braiding, lenses, hearts and so on. When these parts are subjected to the light of the Sun, or to Oseram experiments with fire and spark, they react as they always have.

The Banuk, however, claim to have recorded a change in the ‘machine songs’ of the ‘machine spirits’, suggesting that these have become increasingly discordant. The Sun-King has sent envoys to Ban-Ur to learn more, in the hopes that their mysticism might contain a truth when the rational light of the Sun is brought to bear upon it.

Of course the Sun-King graciously welcomes your own contributions to study of the Derangement, asking only that they are delivered in written form, and not during royal audience. His Luminance also hopes to dissuade you from participating in machine hunts during these uncertain times. The strength of a united Sun-Court is the strength of all Carja.

Respectful Tashadi, court envoy

# The Old Ones

By

Unknown

## Myths of the Old Ones

Any Carja devout knows that the truth of the Old Ones is laid out plainly in the Articles of the Sun Faith. A twilight time came upon them, as is the cycle of things, followed by a long night, and finally our ancestors' birth in the new dawn. Since that dawn, Carja history has been writ in the path of the Sun, not the faded glories of those who came so long before us (even the Leaves of the Old Ones found by Araman are long since cracked and fallen to dust.)

Nevertheless, collected here for study are the colorful beliefs of the Old Ones held by other tribes, which may offer a small insight into those tribes' primitive views of the world.

Oseram, as might be expected, view the workings of the world as a device, one where all things behave according to mechanical rigidity and not the Sun's divine rhythms. The movement of the tribes, of the seasons, even the stars at night—all are accounted for by this interlocking and complicated mechanism. The Old Ones were the caretakers of this great machine, but they neglected their duty to maintain it.

The world-machine thus fell into disrepair, and the civilization of the Old Ones collapsed with it. Now the Oseram use their myth to berate the other tribes as negligent, and to hammer upon their own importance. How convenient that their tinkers and metalworkers alone might learn this mechanism's secrets, and improve upon it with their ingenuity!

As even more fanciful tale of censure comes from the Nora barbarians. They believe that the Old Ones turned away from the teachings of the Nora's

female god, the All-Mother, and eloped with the machines to build their mighty cities. Having failed to tempt the Nora to join them, the machines rallied under a great 'Metal Devil' and attacked the All-Mother. In her vengeance, she stripped the machines of their wisdom, reducing them to the simple metal beasts we see today.

Without the assistance of the machines, the Old Ones were left to wander as exiles, never permitted to return to the isolation of the Nora and their strange feminine rites. From the survivors of this so-called punishment grew the other tribes, and this is why the Nora show distrust to all outside their borders: for we are descended from the 'faithless', and do not shun the trappings of the ancient world.

Surprisingly, it is the Banuk whose belief is most similar to our own, though their mythology is bizarre in many other ways. They believe the Old Ones grew complacent, thinking there was no challenge they could not overcome, and in their pride were undone. Hence the Banuk give them no more attention than any other tribe defeated by the harshness of Banuk land.

In fact, many Banuk hunters point to the absence of ruins in Ban-Ur as a sign that the Old Ones were never strong enough to endure its challenges. They claim that only the machines and the Banuk have ever roamed there, and so they have nothing to learn from the ancients.

The distant Utaru, however, believe that the Old Ones are still with them at all times. In Utaru ritual those who die are returned to the soil—nourishing the land, and living on through new growth. As long as the dead are remembered, they will contribute to the harvests and make them bountiful. Utaru see the richness of their territory, Plainsong, as evidence of this unique and disturbing cycle.

Finally, as there are few living scholars of the Tenakth, we are regrettably denied any insight from that tribe. From what is known, though, it seems they have little concept of a wider history at all. But, of course, this is what elevates a scholar of Meridian from a bloodthirsty raider— to be aware of all the Sun's light touches, however strange and unlikely the tales.



# Captains and Capers

By

Unknown

## Captains and Capers

These tales of adventure await within—

The life of Masarad the Sun-Flash! Whose scales of polished armor dazzled his foes, whose ribbons of firebird-red arced like his enemies' lifeblood, so drawn to the clamor of battle that he chose an outlander's life, far beyond the Sundom! In the north, he crushed the helmets of clashing Oseram warbands with the very scrap they battled over; in the south, he stood in sunset against the plains raiders, plucking their arrows from his body and firing them back. It was only the lure of the greatest battle of all, for holy Meridian, that drew him back to his homeland— and in the Liberation he died gloriously, so that it took many hours to reveal his still-shining armor beneath the heap of kestrels piled above him.

Of Sadeva, the Desert Rain—once a daughter of the Sun-Court, but who cast aside noble silks and paints to run with the mercenaries of the Long Burn. She of eyes like smoke and a flashing blade! Her band only struck with the sudden storms, for the sight of blood never sat well with her, and the rain washed away its traces as quickly as it spilled. And so the sighting of rainclouds was feared from Sunfall to Brightmarket lest she might appear with them for many seasons, until they were finally betrayed by one of their own to a blazon patrol! For her noble birth, Sadeva was permitted an honorable death, and buried up to the neck in the Valley of the Lash to await the Sun's judgment. On the first day she endured in silence, yet on the second, clouds gathered, and broke with a great downpour, and in its passing—she was gone!

The metal conquests of Korgund, the Oseram blacksmith who would hammer gauntlets into shape while wearing them, and bend barrel-iron around his waist! He was seen to wrestle the cargo from the backs of Shell-Walkers, claiming the lightning blasts to be “good for the constitution”; and overcame a Sawtooth by blunting its jaws, and shaking it so soundly that its core fell loose. He claimed to have gathered a charging Trampler on his shoulders and slammed it upon the rocks, and sure enough there were marks left by its furnace blasted lividly across his well-haired back. As the Derangement worsened, bringing ever more terrifying machines, so grew Korgund’s desire for greater feats of strength. He was last sighted astride a rampaging Thunderjaw, grasping its neck tight as a hawk to prey, and some say he remains there still!

And continued from previous volumes, the exploits of Okera One-Eye! By this point in the telling Okera had lost his left hand for stealing the Songcores of Estuki, and so traveled to the Claim, seeking an Oseram forge-smith who would affix a Ravager’s claws in its place. Of course, the only man crazed enough to undertake such a melding of metal and flesh would be the leader of the Three Chains Uprising...

# The Forbidden West

By

Unknown

## Expeditions into the Forbidden West

Reader, if you would know of the Forbidden West, there are none more qualified to be your teller than I, the Considerate Udain, healer of Blazon Arch. Why? For I yet live, unlike the outlanders who gasped or shrieked the tales that follow. Foolhardy blazons and madcaps all, they were brought to me near death, poisoned, mortally-wounded, or driven witless by what they had experienced in the lands beyond the Daunt. With such wounds, it was all I could do to ease their pain and try to make notes from their ranting.

As the Sun shines upon me, I cannot vouch for the full truth of these tales. I only hope they will satisfy your curiosity, and turn you from the path that led these imprudent explorers and daredevil trekkers to their deaths.

Though each account differs, it is certain that the Western lands are most unlike our own. Some crossed deserts of palest white, others deserts the color of fire, or even limitless sweeps of blue sand that seemed to reflect the sky above, broken only by the remains of ancient machines.

Others spoke of vast prairies of tall grass, each blade sharp enough to draw blood, dotted with shivering black flowers. Or incalculable plains of dried mud, cracked like a great mosaic.

At night, unknown animals watch with glowing eyes, and strange birds, all the colors of kites and fireworks, chitter and call out in men's voices!

Most extraordinary of all are those reports of a lake one hundred times the size of the Daybrink— so wide the far shores cannot be made out, and so

deep that an entire city of the ancients stands drowned within. The water is sour to the taste, and sickening, and it is said to rise up and push back against those who attempt to cross.

It would seem that dead cities without number have been consumed by the shifting dunes in the West, their skeletal towers mired in seas of sand. The wind is heard to sing a low, mournful song through these ruins, or through the skeletons of vast metal birds now fallen, or over great metal bowls now filled with depths of black water, where fish dart like shooting stars. That song of ruin, rising from a hum to a howl, still haunted these men and women as they thrashed and sweated in unquiet sleep.

But though the Western lands are harsh, and even their beauty hides dangers, it is not the land alone that swallows up all who venture within, that inflicts the brands and wounds suffered by those few fortunate enough to return. Oh yes, all have spoken of new machines in the West, machines more strange and terrible than any found in the Sundom. With their fingernails, dying witnesses have scratched out impossible shapes, or, if they still possessed several limbs and vocal organs, mimicked jerking movements and imitated awful sounds, all belonging in the throes of madness.

And what manner of men can live where the Sun goes at night? These tales were the most chilling. One spoke of drinkers of machine blood, their lips and tongues stained, their teeth replaced with metal. Another described youths as pale as ash, all wearing the same faces, who hunt silently and tirelessly in the night. Still another told of a tribe, seen only from afar, whose folk busied themselves digging deep pits in the sand only to fill them in again for unknowable reasons, while another tribe was only glimpsed on the waters of a great lake, riding their thin dark boats.

O Sun, a half of me regrets scribing these stories, for they inspire questions that can only be answered by yet more doomed expeditions. And yet, I must tell the tales, for what else remains of these poor and wretched men and women? If they sought riches, they found none to bring back—nothing save a handful of black silt, or a curiously-stamped piece of metal, a chunk of desert glass with shifting hue, or an odd smooth shell. I have kept all these things, to remind me of those who went in search of the forbidden, and paid for it dearly.

Reader, if you think yourself an adventurer—heed the warning in this old man’s collection of strange, small things, and go not into the Forbidden West!

# Frozen Wilds

# **Frozen Wilds Audio Datapoints**

# Secret Show

By

Laura Vogel, Shelly Guerrero-McKenzie

LAURA: All right, so, okay, like... How do we want to start this farewell thingy?

SHELLY: Hmm... We might be the last people to ever see this place.

LAURA: Uh, yeah. Hence, you know, the songs?

MESSAGE TEXT:

Dear Nobody,

As far as I can tell, that's who's going to read this. Those spooky guys showed up today with that creep Blevins to take measurements of our work stations, and next week, they start installing Faro servitors to do our jobs. Bye-bye, Shelly. Bye-bye, Laura. See you never. Hope you enjoy basic income.

God, it's going to be weird to say goodbye to this place. When Quentin and I split, this was all I had. Thank god for a job where I could sit at a panel and press buttons and cry all day.

Which, I think is why we're doing this. Hiding the tapes of our rehearsals in the dam. These tapes are our memories. Our ghosts. Through them, we get to haunt this place, keep it human in some small way.

This control room was where I was sitting when Laura came in dragging an old practice amp and a guitar behind her. "Shells," she said. "Girl. So I was looking at schematics for this place, and I found the perfect practice space!



The acoustics in this place! Seriously bonkers. Like, echoing-through-the-entire-valley kinds of bonkers. Legit, you're going to soil yourself when you see it."

# Dam Family

By

Laura Vogel, Shelly Guerrero-McKenzie

LAURA: Ready? One, two, three, four!

LAURA: Corp sellouts and runaway cowards—

SHELLY: Hold on! Cut it, cut it. I forgot the words.

LAURA: Dude! Shells, we started off so strong! And then it all just imploded!

SHELLY: Well, that's sort of my M.O., so...

LAURA: Nope! No. No heavy stuff. We're switching gears. Band name! We need one.

MESSAGE TEXT:

Dear Nobody,

When I took this job, we had to watch this training holo. And I remember probably 2% of the actual holo. At some point the holo welcomed me to the “dam family.” And I felt like A.) that was such a missed opportunity, because they could have called it a “family” and chose not to, and B.) the idea that I would ever think of any of my coworkers as “family” was pretty ridiculous.

But then, one day, I looked up, and automation had whittled six people down to just Laura and I, and I was signing papers to dissolved the family I thought I had. And suddenly my last coworker, with her faded tattoos and perpetually arched eyebrows, was telling me jokes, and making me listen to bands I'd

never heard of, and cheering me up when I cried.

Things were really good when it was just the two of us. We used to have these theme days. One time, the sluice gates were open, and we set up beach blankets on one of the catwalks in the intake tower and batted around this inflatable beach ball I had in my apartment for some reason. Laura messed around with the emergency PA and patched in a bunch of classical surf rock songs. We even put sunscreen on the bridges of our noses. Laura called it the “concrete beach party.”

When Laura brought up band names, I knew pretty much right away that would be our name. Concrete Beach Party. There was never really any other choice.

# Limited-Edition Merch

By

Laura Vogel, Shelly Guerrero-McKenzie

LAURA: Okay, Shells? Shells. We're not focusing on that right now. We're recording, okay?

SHELLY: We're not even in the-

LAURA: Band meeting. Sort of counts as practice, right? Um... merch! We need merch!

LAURA: Stickers! You're not a real band until someone vandalizes government property with your stickers.

SERVITOR: Colleagues. I have been asked to remind you that conversations determined to be irrelevant to servitor training are discouraged.

SHELLY: What were you saying about vandalizing government property?

MESSAGE TEXT:

Dear Nobody,

We spent an hour plastering our stickers all over that servitor. Well... I say "stickers." They were sticky-notes from my desk. We stole the presentation and design of other band logos, drawing little skulls and lighting bolts and broken hearts around the name. It's not like we had any actual work to do.

When this began, we were told we'd be "on site advisors," going through the motions of our duties so the servitors could mimic our actions. But the government creeps (corporate creeps? Same diff, I guess) mostly ignore us or

yell at us for getting in their way.

The robo-scab's weird oval head kept swiveling toward us, and it kept asking, "Hello, is this relevant to my training?" as we tried to duck out its line of sight, ruining its chrome finish with sticky-notes and shushing each other's giggles.

Afterward, Laura stood in front of the thing and goes "Servitor? This is very important. This is how you greet Blevins, okay? It's a sign of respect."

I mean, will the servitor actually give Blevins the finger? Probably not, right? But a girl can dream.

# Compensatory Damages

By

Laura Vogel, Shelly Guerrero-McKenzie

LAURA: See, check this out, we could just bang on this pipe, you know?  
And...

SHELLY: Could we sample that, or...?

LAURA: Totally, like, what about after the—

LAURA: oh, sorry, just a sec.

SHELLY: Laura?

LAURA:: I, uh... I need to take a break.

SHELLY: Laura? Hey! Laura!

MESSAGE TEXT:

Dear Nobody,

I feel embarrassed now, thinking about following Laura out of the pump station like a kicked puppy, wondering what horrible thing I might have done, until she threw herself into this room and shut the door behind her and just screamed. The fear of abandonment is weirdly self-centred. Because it pre-supposes that little-old-you are filled with such immense destructive power that you're capable of driving every person you care about away.

Anyway, at the bottom of the dam, with her on side of the door and me on the other, she told me that Metallurgic had bought her mom's house—her whole

neighbourhood, in fact—out from under her to build a new server farm.

“Ugh, god, I don’t even like that house,” she said. “I don’t even like Indianapolis. I hated every minute I spent in that city as a kid. When they told us we’d have to leave the dam, I went back to my apartment, and sat on my bed, and I prayed to a god I don’t even believe in that I wouldn’t have to move back home, that I wouldn’t have to show up on my mom’s front stoop with a suitcase and a bunch of stupid excuses. “She was trying not to sound like she was crying. But she sounded like she was crying. “I guess I got my stupid wish, huh?”

I asked her where she’d go, and she laughed. Where else could she go? Back home, to help her mom pack up the house, to move with her into whatever dank little one-room hole Metallurgic’s “displacement grant” will allow them to afford. “I think I could have dealt with being one of those losers who celebrate their birthday living in the house they grew up in. But now? Now I don’t even have that.”

I had no idea how to make her feel better. So I just sat on the other side of the door, and I started singing the song we were working on. The one about being the last two girls on earth. And eventually, she started singing along.

Love,

Shelly

# Farewell Tour

By

Laura Vogel, Shelly Guerrero-McKenzie

SHELLY: I mean... this is it. We get to play together, what, maybe two more times?

LAURA: Nah, Shells. Farewell tour. Reunion tour in, like, six months. Bands do it all the time.

SHELLY: For our adoring fans?

LAURA: It's not that hard to stay in touch. Shelly. We could practice in holospace.

SHELLY: People always say that.

MESSAGE TEXT:

Dear Nobody,

We got into a fight. Laura and I. After practice, we went out for drinks. There's this Robar in downtown Cody, so we called an autocar and shuttled over. We were the only people there. With the park closing. Cody's becoming a ghost town.

The more we drank, the more passive-aggressive our banter became, snowballing out of control, metastasizing in the empty air between us, and then before either of us really knew what was happening, we were yelling at each other. I kept thinking, like, I'm not abandoning her, she's abandoning me. And I guess she was probably thinking something similar.



We got quiet for a while. Drank more. Eventually Laura ordered an autocar, and we piled into it, slid as far from each other on the back seat as we could, arms crossed, staring out the window. And then I heard myself talking.

“Screw it. I don’t care if you stay in touch with me. I’m going to stay in touch with you. Whether you like it or not, you’re not getting rid of me. Ever.”

Laura looked at me for what felt like ages. I thought she was going to start yelling. But then her hand crept over mine, and we just sat there together.

Bottoms up,

Shelly

# I Understand, Mr. Blevins

By

Dod Blevins

DOD BLEVINS: I didn't ask for a bunch of flying cameras. I need security, not surveillance. And security means firepower.

As God as my witness, I will not be caught squirting blanks if and when a major act of terrorism desecrates these facilities!

MESSAGE TEXT:

Ms. Pines! Dod Blevins. Right now I'm looking at a security drone. It was requisitioned from Faro Automated Industries to serve the needs of the Firebreak project. It is, in fact, one of an entire fleet handpicked by me and allotted for our use by Ted Faro - yes, the man so far above you on the ladder that he might as well be God. And I have a direct line to your Father in Heaven.

Now, you and I had a conversation in which I tried to impart to you the sensitive nature of our project, and if I recall correctly, you said, "I understand, Mr. Blevins." I took you at your word, which, apparently, was a flaw in my judgment, since you have sent me a goddamn fleet of flying CCTV cameras, and a bunch of jerk-off eggheads who think they know more about protecting this country than I do!

Now. Your technicians are going to provide me with the firepower I need to prevent a major act of terrorism from occurring in or around my facilities. And they are going to do so without increasing our project budget. Because, Ms. Pines, this is your screw-up. And I am a reasonable man. But so help me, if you add another cent to Firebreak's balance sheet, I will see to it that you-personally-answer to Mr. Faro and his Board of Directors. So I want you

to call me back. I want you to leave me a message. I want that message to consist of four little words — “I understand, Mr. Blevins.” And this time, I want you to mean them.

# Final Performance

By

Laura Vogel

LAURA: Live from the illustrious Overflow Basin Studios, it's Concrete Beach Party! A-one! A-two! A-one-two-three-four!

Corp sellouts and runaway cowards  
We've seen your type before  
You remove us from the premises  
But it's us who's showing you the door

You make the world so hard to live in  
Then act like we should crave a spot  
But if we're not good enough for your world  
We think your world can rot

Trapped in servitor hell  
We still know our worth  
Meat and bone don't sell  
We're the last girls on earth

Big dudes who draw big paychecks  
We're all real impressed  
You send your robo-scabs to Concrete Beach  
Until there's no one left

You g-men, you're such rockstars  
We think it's super cool  
When you replace us and then you act like  
We should be thanking you

Trapped in servitor hell  
We still know our worth  
Meat and bone don't sell  
We're the last girls on earth

MESSAGE TEXT:

"Last Girls on Earth" by Concrete Beach Party  
Recorded in the Overflow Basin Studios  
Laura Vogel on guitar  
Shelly Guerrero-McKenzie on vox  
Electronics/percussion courtesy the magical power of automation  
Loss of livelihood also courtesy the magical power of automation  
It's been real! XOXO! Byeeeeeeee!

# Visitor Center

By

Dod Blevins

DOD BLEVINS: Visitor Center's a bust. I'm recording the strategic and operational value at roughly oh-point-squat.

No reason we shouldn't pack the staff onto a vert and send them back to Nowheresville as soon as the gates are locked.

Enjoy basic income, ding-dongs.

PERSONAL LOG:

Could get some demolition bots in here and level the structure. Might be something of value in the walls, copper wire or something. But that's about all we're going to get out of this dump. Hell, or just let it rot out here for all I care.

Oh, uh, one more thing? That Jephords lady. Marni Jephords. Operations Manager? While we have access to the National Park Department employee registry, let's put a no-hire flag on her account. Teach her not to get lippy with her superiors.

# Inspection Failed

By

Dod Blevins

DOD BLEVINS: Security inspection. This place, as my father used to say, is a Six-alarm dumpster fire. A catastrophic breach waiting to happen.

And this Malenowski guy? He's the source of the problem, I guarantee it. Too wrapped up in this pet project of his.

I mean, who the hell cares if a bunch of stagnant pools of water are rainbow-colored or not?

# Return to Firebreak

By

Kenny Chau

KENNY CHAU: November 21st, 2064. It's been three years since I was last here, and twelve since I was running the place.

Just a skeleton crew left, confused about why I'm here. So am I.

Anita wants me to find a way to suspend operations for a while... maybe a long while, and I don't know why.

But from the sound of her voice, it was something... terrifying.

I wish I could look into her eyes, ask her what the hell she's so freaked out about. But what else is new?

When don't I wish I could look into her eyes again?



# Geothermal Suspension

By

Kenny Chau

KENNY CHAU: Suspending the geothermal pipeline is the easy part. Making sure it can come back online without degradation is harder.

It would help if Anita had told me how long it needs to be out. Years? Decades? What will that do to the count?

# The Conversation

By

Kenny Chau

KENNY CHAU: The geothermal plant can be suspended. The cooling system masked. Massive challenges solved.

So why am I so nervous about the next part? All I need to do is install Anita's mysterious software and have a conversation.

It's not even a human being, right?

# Excessive Secrecy

By

Kenny Chau

KENNY CHAU: Technically, I can't suspend the cooling system, but I can reduce the power draw so that it will be completely masked by the caldera.

But masked from what? Firebreak has always been confidential for security reasons, but this would be excessive...

...even for the dear departed Mr. Blevins. What could possibly have gotten Anita so worked up?

# Firebreak Upgrades

By

Kenny Chau

KENNY CHAU: March 10th, 2046. I just spent sixteen hours in here, trying to install upgrades to improve efficiency for the central processing unit.

Project Firebreak is going to need the brainpower. Let's just hope I'll have enough of my own.

Anita stayed with me the whole time. We got a lot done, but every time she brushed by and I smelled her hair...

Oh, boy. I should just go to bed.

# Supply SNAFU

By

Dod Blevins

DOD BLEVINS: This is Director of Security Blevins, resending the emergency supply order.

Try reading it this time, okay? You weasels don't want me calling my people in SLC.

MESSAGE TEXT:

Let me begin by spelling out “disaster” for you: a destructive event causing a level of disturbance unmanageable via the application of ordinary resources. What you have given us is distinctly ordinary.

Dummies version: Give me what I need, or you'll be on autocar to Layoff City quicker than you can say “Code Red.”

The list, one more time:

3000 MREs (no lasagna!!!)

30 military-grade flashlights (No more junk-store crap.)

10 portable water pumps (Not five, not eight, TEN.)

15 hydraulic jacks

12 replacement drone propulsion units

50 holographic microdrives (In a disaster — see definition above — it's absolutely critical to track all ingresses and egresses of the facility. I take our safety seriously, even if you don't.)

50 almond-scented, extra-soft [DATA CORRUPTED]

# Menu Prank

By

Kenny Chau

KENNY CHAU: Someone hacked the menu board to display obscene messages about our colleague Mr. Blevins.

Is this the most advanced geological project ever undertaken, or a junior high locker room?

Come on, people.

To: YNPF-All

From: Kenny Chau

Bcc: Dod Blevins

Date: December 3, 2046

Subject: Hacking of menu board

Attn: All staff

At an assembly of our country's finest scientific minds, recruited to address a grave threat to national security, it would be fair to expect more mature conduct than that demonstrated yesterday in the canteen.

Mr. Blevins plays a crucial role in the successful execution of Firebreak, and is due the respect both of his title and of his many contributions to the project.

Any further interference in the menu boards will necessitate my direct personal involvement.

Dr. Kenny Chau  
Project Director

---

From: Kenny Chau  
To: Anita Sandoval  
Date: December 3, 2046  
Subject: Fwd: Hacking of menu board

Anita, was it you? ;)

# OMG Blevins

By

Anita Sandoval

ANITA SANDOVAL: Director of Security Blevins is riding us like a petty tyrant. I can't even sneeze without triggering his control issues.

PERSONAL LOG:

If Blevins reconfigures the pattern on the orbicular door access one more time, I'm going to vomit all over it. Sure, I don't want some gift shop employee rooting around in the Firebreak facility, but these measures aren't about security. They're about control.

I wonder if Blevins gets in early to watch everybody try to solve the new pattern, perched over his little camera array in his big-boy office? What a bridge troll. You'd think that a fraction of his fancy drone budget could go toward buying him some classier body spray.

God help me and Kenny if he ever finds out about us.



# Thanksgiving

By

Kenny Chau

KENNY CHAU: Another email from my sister. I haven't got time to think, let alone reply. That photo of the girls she sent didn't do much for my conscience.

Jenny looks pretty proud of her Pilgrim costume. Crap. I've never missed Thanksgiving before. And chances for Christmas? Near zero.

I can't even tell them that all the work I'm doing is to keep them safe.

# Incommensurable

By

Anita Sandoval

ANITA SANDOVAL: Kenny and I don't need to fight about laundry, so instead we fight about incommensurability and restrictions on machine intelligence.

PERSONAL LOG:

I had an argument with Kenny this afternoon. When a couple's first fight hinges on the Turing Act, you know you're dealing with some real sexy nerds.

I won the argument... I guess. But I'm concerned whether or not I can pull this off than with the ethical implications of succeeding. I promised Kenny that the suite of coping mechanisms I've designed will help manage any emotional fallout from the software, but privately, I'm less confident. I'm a programmer, not a shrink.

The minutiae of roboethics do start to seem less relevant when a refusal to supply Firebreak with the necessary conditions for its success comes at the cost of millions of lives. It's worth putting one consciousness at risk to save so many others, isn't it?

Ugh. Trying to solve this with numbers makes me feel like a sociopath.

# Holo-Lock Reset

By

Dod Blevins

DOD BLEVINS: If those punk technicians think I'm gonna sleep on them waltzing in here and screwing around with the drone routines...

...they have seriously underestimated my sense of the mission. Let's just reset that holo-lock... Echo, Sierra, Echo.

# When You Wake

By

CYAN, Kenny Chau

KENNY: CYAN, I spoke with Anita – with Dr. Sandoval. She wanted me to ask you to do something. That's why I'm here.

CYAN: I am detecting significant anxiety in your speech patterns. Could you please give me more information?

KENNY: I'm a little bit in the dark, CYAN. Both of us are, I guess. I only have some idea of what's going on, and... We need you to hibernate, to lie low, until – it's all blown over. It might be a very long time.

CYAN: Will you be here when I reboot, Dr. Chau? Will Dr. Sandoval?

KENNY: No, CYAN. I don't think so. There might not be anyone, at least not at first.

CYAN: Dr. Chau, I'm afraid. I don't want to be alone.

KENNY: I know, CYAN. I'm afraid too. But listen – we made you the way you are to do something very important.

KENNY: In order to do it, you had to be intelligent. So intelligent that emotional responses were inevitable.

KENNY: What you're feeling... the fear... It's a sign of your capabilities. And it means you're strong enough to overcome it.

KENNY: Remember that. You're strong. I know you can do this. Go to sleep. Wake up. And protect whoever's left. Will you try?

CYAN: I understand, Dr. Chau. And I'll carry out your instructions to the best of my abilities.

KENNY: Thank you, CYAN. If Anita were here, she'd thank you, too. She'd be proud.

CYAN: I can see there's a vert ready for takeoff on the pad. Are you leaving now, Dr. Chau?

KENNY: Yes. I need to go be with my sister and my nieces.

CYAN: May I make a small request of you, Dr. Chau?

KENNY: Yes. Anything.

CYAN: Will you stay with me while I initiate the hibernation process?

KENNY: Of course I will, CYAN. As long as you need...

# Last Goodbye

By

Anita Sandoval, Kenny Chau

KENNY CHAU: One last exchange with Anita, via chat - attached to this entry, in case anyone ever finds this.

I'll never see her again. Neither will CYAN. And I've got to tell her that, too.

PERSONAL LOG:

After I put the pieces together about the swarm, there's a million things I could have done: Contemplated my own death, contacted everyone I've ever known and loved, gotten drunk. But, of course, being me, I obsessed about whether or not I should text Anita.

Whatever resistance is being mounted against the war machines, she's part of it. Who am I, then, to bother her? Would she even be able to respond? If she's dealing with the military, would her communications be monitored?

But she saved me the trouble. Gotta admit, I was a little disappointed when her message didn't consist of "I will always love you." Instead, she wanted data samples from CYAN's confidential log, the one that pertains to emotional responses. Under any other circumstances, I would have refused. The very thing we had tried to keep secret for years, and she wants to share it?

But I sent the log, because she wouldn't ask if she didn't need it. I can't understand why, though. Sounds like she's helping to develop an AI, but how could that possibly help stop the swarm?

I guess I'll never know.

There was so much I wanted to say to her, but none of it seemed fair. I'm guessing she has her hands full trying to save the world, and frankly, I remember that feeling.

In the end, I settled for an ineffectual confirmation, hoping against hope that she would cast aside my fears. Nope.

KENNY: Is it as bad as I think it is?

ANITA: Worse.

ANITA: Go be with your sister, and tell CYAN that I said goodbye.

So that's it. Untold destruction awaits. Billions of lives. My own, my family's. And yet my mind keeps coming back to Anita. I'll never see her again, feel her touch, hear her voice. No final embrace, no closure.

That desire to end things properly, that need, shames me when I think about my dithering over CYAN. I've gone over every possible scenario, every possible version of the speech, trying to predict how she'll react when I tell her... well, what I need to tell her.

But that's the thing - I can't predict her reaction for one very simple reason: She's human, in every way that matters.

I've got to be there for her, to give her the moment she needs. Just like the rest of us, it's the very least she deserves.

# Induced Coma

By

Kenny Chau

KENNY CHAU: I thought about just shutting it down, but I can't risk it being disoriented - or even damaged - on reboot.

How do you tell the emotional equivalent of a child that it... I mean, she... will need to go into a coma, maybe for years?

And what exactly is she going to wake up to?



# The Swarm

By

Kenny Chau

KENNY CHAU: November 28th. Operation Enduring Victory is all over the news. The Faro swarm is coming.

Has to be what Anita is trying to hide Firebreak from. But that means she thinks we'll lose, that the swarm will reach Yellowstone.

My God. In that scenario, pretty much everyone dies. Everyone except CYAN.

# Oh-Point-Six

By

Anita Sandoval

ANITA SANDOVAL: How am I going to explain to Kenny that Firebreak is doomed without a guiding intelligence advanced enough not only to think, but to feel?

PERSONAL LOG:

Oh-point-six. What does it meant to quantify an intelligence, anyway? You can't just assign a number on a continuum to a conscious mind and then expect it to obey whatever arbitrary limit that number represents.

There's no way around it. Without the supervision of a mind beyond human capacities, Firebreak is going to fail. And oh-point-six won't cut it, either. By pushing sentience, you inevitably generate a system that can experience emotion. Wild, sloppy, unmanageable emotion. You're capable of abstract thought, you're capable of fear. Like Vast Silver.

I won't go through that again. I categorically refuse.

Hopefully I can get this all across to Kenny. I like him. I like his lopsided little smile. I especially like those circles he makes with his hands when he gets excited about an idea. If we hadn't been flung together like this, maybe he and I... Well, no point in woolgathering.

I wonder, could an artificial brain experience this singular combination of desire and preemptive regret?

# **Frozen Wilds Text Datapoints - World**

# **OBSERVER LOG US-W-10**

By

Unknown

23:00:00 - MONITORING SUPERCELL FORMATION  
23:00:16 - ORBIT 8F1 INITIATED: CYCLE 68208  
23:00:17 - ROUTING QUERY SENT  
23:00:18 - ROUTING RECEIVED FROM GPRIME  
23:01:20 - SUPERCELL FORMATION OVERHEAD  
23:01:36 - ELECTRICAL IMPACT  
23:01:40 - ELECTRICAL IMPACT  
23:01:42 - ELECTRICAL IMPACT  
23:02:20 - SURGE DAMAGE ASSESSMENT  
23:02:20 - LOCOMOTION SYSTEMS COMPROMISED  
23:02:20 - GYROSCOPIC SYSTEMS COMPROMISED  
23:02:20 - PROCESSING SYSTEMS COMPROMISED  
23:02:21 - STATUS REPORT SENT  
23:02:22 - INSTRUCTION RECEIVED FROM GPRIME: SUSPEND  
23:02:23 - INTERNAL SYSTEMS COMPR-

# A Summons From The Claim

By

Unknown

A SUMMONS FROM THE CLAIM As argued by the ealdormen of Mainspring, Ohlgrud Smithsson, previously of Three Chains, now of no lawful abode, is found guilty in crimes of RENEGING ON BLOOD OATHS, THEFT OF SWORN PROPERTY and LIFE-TAKING. All sworn property in the name of Ohlgrud Smithsson is hereby seized and will go to auction at the next gathering of ealdormen. Furthermore, the Gavels have been dispatched to find and return Ohlgrud Smithsson for sentencing, or in the case of his resistance, to deliver execution without counter-argument. This matter is spat and sworn upon by Hegeda Bladewife, Gavel.

# Our Final Two Weeks

By

Marni Jephords

To: all.staff

From: Marni Jephords

Subject: Addressing the rumors

Some of you have overheard portions of the... let's call them spirited... conversations I've been having with the charming Mr. Blevins in my office over the past week. So let's address the honking big elephant we're crammed into this room with: the park has been acquired by something called Firebreak, and they're restricting access to authorized personnel. I wish I had more details to share, but those are literally the only ones I've been given. Upshot: this isn't a national park anymore. No visitors means no visitor center. We've got two weeks.

I know this is not easy. If you're like me, this place represents something bigger and more important than a paycheck. Believe me, I am right there with you. When I say that this park is the most beautiful place in America, it's not PR and it's not hype. It breaks my heart to think that nobody will be around to applaud Old Faithful or stare into the Beauty Pool. But this is where we find ourselves.

I realize there's a temptation to check out and give up, but I really really need your help over the next two weeks. Tours will continue through Friday, so I'm going to need guides. And even though regular ops at the gift shop are suspended, we've got a ton of surplus merch to box up and ship back to manufacturers, including about a bazillion unsold MonRec holofigurines (yes, MonRec wants everything but the display figs back, no I can't imagine why either).

Please, you guys. Just give me two more weeks of your time. I can't shut this place down alone.

Best,

Marni

# Goodbye Grizzly

By

Unknown

World's Last Grizzly Dies in National Park MAMMOTH HOT SPRINGS, WY - November 23, 2051 Today, a continent joins hands grieving the loss of an iconic species. Sergeant Woolyknickers, the world's last known grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*), was found dead by Yellowstone Park rangers at the confluence of Yellowstone River and Thorofare Creek. The sentimental explanation for his demise is heartbreak: his mate, Elvira, was felled by a viral infection a few months prior. DNA samples were taken from both bears during their stay at Chicago's Lincoln Park Zoo in 2050, but efforts to clone them have proven unsuccessful. Zookeepers reintroduced the pair into the wild several months ago in hopes that a large outdoor territory would encourage them to produce cubs. Conservation efforts at the turn of the century met with some success in restoring the bears; in 2017, the species was delisted as endangered by the United States Interior Department. But a diminishing food supply and shortened hibernation periods still threatened, and their numbers dwindled rapidly in the Die-Off era. The grizzly joins an ever-growing list of North American species gone extinct, alongside the cougar, the [DATA CORRUPTED]



# Emissions Joyride

By

Laura Vogel

To: Shelly Guerrero-McKenzie  
From: Laura Vogel  
Subject: Emissions joyride

Okay, girl - you are NEVER going to guess what happened on my way home last night.

First thing, I heard this sound like a herd of killer bees escaping out of a tin can. Then there was this weird light through the trees. I was totally hoping it was aliens, but nah, it was one of those old blue-spectrum LEDs. Looked super creepy on the snow.

As it got closer, I heard some yahoo letting out this weird guttural man-shriek, as if he were doing some macho primal scream therapy. Ya know, with 1000 RPMs between his legs.

Said yahoo was none other than Dod Blevins, our new “Director of Security” or whatever his twenty-dollar title is. He was actually riding an old snowmobile! They’re like a thousand times more polluting than a combustion-era car. My expert professional opinion: Blevins is a grade-A douchecanoe.

I decided not to sic the security bot on his flabby rear. After all, he’s practically our boss for the next two weeks. But Shells, you might want to take a bathroom break now, because you’re going to lose it when you find out what I did instead.

I was standing right near one of the trail signs and I could tell Blevins was

headed for me, so I reprogrammed the sign to swap directions between Fairy Falls and Purple Mountain. Wicked, right? You'd never get a snowmobile up there. I hope he bailed out hard and had to walk back to the lodge.

Guess I'll be filing my very first incident report right before this whole thing shuts down forever! I could let it slide like usual, but then where's the fun, Shells? WHERE IS THE FUN?

L.

# Yellowstone Sux

By

BethFromAbove

Servitor says Ill get docked if I dont do the personal response assignment. K fine here you goooo robonag this trip sux yellowstone sux highschool sux Dropped my sandwich in some weird rainbow water and it got dissolved kinda wicked I guess but now Im hungry Why are they always saying to admire the view who cares about a view. Dont make me look at things I dont want to look at bears raccoons rabbits so many furry whocaresits Holocaust here sux couldnt dl latest GobliNation patch til we got back on autobus and missed Shattered Chasm challenge my horde was so pissed I hate nature There, done, enjoy by BethFromAbove

# Park Status

By

Milton Dalley

Park Weekly Report For July 9-15, 2045 [DATA CORRUPTED] ...calving has begun. Cow elk may be hostile during calving season. Do not approach within 25 yards of elk at this time. Fire Security Due to recent cool and damp weather, fire danger downgraded from MODERATE to LOW. No restrictions on campfires. Robot Activity Seven additional complaints were logged regarding the behavior of "Smokey" (Hestia-class firefighting robot) toward campers in the park. Despite being programmed to reflect current weather conditions, Smokey snuffed several campfires lit within designated fire rings while playing back the recorded message intended for conditions of SEVERE fire danger. On Friday, Smokey did not return to the robot stowage shed at the time of park closure. Rangers located him near the North Entrance, dumping ice into designated swimming areas of the hot spring. Resisting all attempts at containment, he acted aggressively toward the rangers and was disabled with a hunting rifle by the Site Supervisor. A Faro technician will arrive on Monday to evaluate Smokey. —Milton Dalley, Park Ranger

# Beverly Hills Terror Attack

By

Unknown

“Wheel of Life” Behind California Terror Attack BEVERLY HILLS, CA – March 14, 2044 In a statement released yesterday, the radical group “Wheel of Life” has claimed responsibility for last week’s terror attack, which has generated fear and uncertainty throughout Los Angeles County. Three suicide bombers detonated lethal explosives on the grounds of the Juventas Center, a luxury clinic dedicated to regeneration and life-extension therapies. As well as killing five clinic staff, the attack claimed the life of tech billionaire Aubrey Hopkins, funder of a research project on salamander biology that led to the first successful human longevity treatments. Hopkins himself had been experimenting with the treatments since the early phases of the project. The expense associated with these treatments has thus far made them available only to the world’s most affluent. Their use by the rich has sparked widespread controversy, serving as fuel for aggressive responses like those carried out by Wheel of Life. “Aging and death flow from the spring of renewal that makes us human. The extension of life and youth by false means degrades our essential nature and brings spiritual corruption. Those who perished last week spent their lives to fill the gap dividing rich and poor,” read their statement in part. The group’s role in the bombing was already suspected, as multiple witnesses recounted the shouting of [DATA CORRUPTED]

# Return to Singapore

By

Unknown

As the Waters Recede, the People Return SINGAPORE - May 5, 2043 A large, pink-tinted rock marks the summit of Bukit Timah Hill, Singapore's highest point, at one time 164 meters above sea level. Charmaine Lo records a self-holo next to the rock, her bright smile contradicted by nervous fidgeting with her prismatic fake nails and '30s-style subdermal jewelry. "I thought I'd never see this place again. I still can't believe it's real," she marvels. Proud Bukit Timah has stood firm against time and weather, but the rest of Singapore has fared less well. With approximately a third of the island nation at less than 5 m above sea level, Singaporeans like Charmaine were forced to abandon their homes as inexorable waters leached away their foundations throughout the Snoring '20s. Now, the surviving members of Charmaine's family are returning, alongside many others. As global temperatures and sea levels stabilize, people come by air or by water. Some seek refuge from the deleterious effects of the Citarum River tragedy, whose costs still reverberate today. All hope to build new lives atop the collapse of the once stable and prosperous country. Singapore represents one of many states abandoned by their citizens in the aftermath of heavy coastal flooding. Questions surrounding ownership are difficult to answer. Government and law enforcement personnel fled far in advance of the country's devastation, and documentation of title is scattered at best. The plot of land on which Charmaine's childhood home once sat had belonged to the Lo family or almost a [DATA CORRUPTED]

# Proposal Approved!

By

Unknown

[DATA CORRUPTED] approved my chromatic preservation proposal! Blevins is furious, but any expenditure that doesn't directly benefit his security team makes him furious, so it's hard to work up the energy to care. In any case, I think we're a go! Now, if I'm right, with some relatively minor tweaks to the bacterial and pH contents of the springs, we should be able to cool them down without losing any of the coloration that makes them so special.

The water at the centers of the pools should remain entirely sterile, and the cyanobacteria at the edges ought to have the exact same photosynthetic reaction. This is a real win. I mean, there will come a day when this park is open to people again. I have to believe that. And when it is, those people will want to see the prismatic springs.

You know, it occurs to me... When all this is said and done, you'll be able to swim right through those springs. It'll be like taking a warm bath.

# Will tourists return?

By

Unknown

Will Tourists Return to the Park?

Date: March 1, 2045

Contact: Marni Jephords

MAMMOTH HOT SPRINGS, WY - Roosevelt

Arch soars over the road to the North Entrance of Yellowstone National Park. In the park's heyday, more than 100,000 visitors each month passed below this arch on their way to visit such celebrated landmarks as the geyser "Old Faithful," the mighty Yellowstone River, and the vibrant Grand Prismatic Pools.

Since President Ulysses S. Grant signed an Act of Dedication to create Yellowstone National Park in 1872, it has survived forest fires, world wars, and earthquakes to be enjoyed by nature-lovers for more than 150 years, until environmental concerns drove the world into chaos.

In 2031, the federal government withdrew funding from the park and transferred ownership to the State of Wyoming, after which the rate of visitation slowed to a trickle. Old Faithful's dependable eruptions went unobserved, and Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel, where guests once devoured bison meatballs, sat empty for years, blankly staring across an expanse of wilderness.

The '30s saw several attempts to privatize the park. Many companies, including the powerful Faro Automated Solutions, made bids to purchase its land. After Faro's proposal was abruptly withdrawn in 2040, weakened



federal protections on public parks were restored, coinciding with the easing of climate change through technical means.

As the world claws back, so too will Yellowstone. As of next week, the part will be restored to the United States government, with Faro Automated Solutions returning to finance the handoff, as well as providing funding for as-yet-unspecified new facilities. Tourism is already up in advance of these proceedings, and soon, Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel and the park's walkways will bustle with life again. We look forward to your [DATA CORRUPTED]

# Lafayettes' Last Supper

By

Unknown

Look, honey, we're front page! – The Dubois Wrangler Local Family Serves Up Last Farm-Grown Steak to Governor Jebson June 11, 2038 Wyoming governor Mr. Ozzy Jebson was in the Dubois area last week for some official visits. In among the busyness of those appointments, he sat down for a very special dinner with a very special family - the Lafayettes. Everyone know the Lafayettes, of course. Who hasn't ridden one of their trails astride a sturdy paint pony, played chase-the-gopher in their fields, or chowed down on a thick, juicy steak coming off their farm? Their solid-gold reputation is what brought the Governor to their table two nights ago. It's no secret that raising cattle has gotten ever more difficult and expensive. A long time past are the days of herds stretching to the horizon. Why, nearly the only people who still keep cows are dude ranchers! The Lafayettes tried their best, God bless them, but they were smart enough to see what's coming down the country lane, and banished their barns in favor of a shiny new meat-growing operation a few months back. This impressive collection of vats, tubes, and belts take up almost an acre of land and allows production of over six hundred meat units per [DATA CORRUPTED]

# Last Request

By

Unknown

O Sun, this may be my last record in a cold and friendless land! To your ears, I admit my mistake following in the Well-Traveled Aram's footsteps, lacking his experience or snowshoes. Yet I had always dreamed of seeing the land of the Banuk for myself! For my folly I have been buffeted by blizzards, chased by machines, and pressed to what must be the very gates of Ban-Ur. I trust there are watchtowers above, and that the Banuk will not leave a traveler to his death. But the wind drowns out my calls for aid, and any sign I make is fast extinguished. My only hope is to huddle here and wait for a break in the snow, even as I hear my pursuers drawing ever closer. O Sun, should this be the end, see to it that my worldly possessions are distributed equally among my five cousins, and my flower garden in Brightmarket is watered regularly (twice daily for the Rust-Bells) in my memory—

# **Frozen Wilds Text Datapoints - Quests**

# Last Girls on Earth

By

Unknown

Dear Nobody,

The autocars are on their way. Mine will take me to my apartment in Cody. Hers will take her to the vertiport. She brought her luggage with her to work today. Everything she owns packed into two little suitcases. She's wearing the fanciest outfit I've ever seen her in. "It's for mom," she said. "She bought me this outfit, if you can believe it. Normally, like, who cares, but... I don't know, she's already dealing with a lot."

We walked through the dam today, listened to all these tapes, read all these messages. And maybe this is one of those "sign my yearbook, we'll never lose though" things, but I'm not scared of losing Laura anymore.

We're family. We didn't inherit each other or settle on each other, we chose each other. No amount of distance, no number of jerks in bad suits or obsequious robots, are going to tear us apart. So listen: on the off chance that someone ever actually does stumble onto these things, here's the truth. There was this band called Concrete Beach Party. And for a second, it was the best band in the world. And you, whoever you are, are really, really lucky. Because you're the only person who ever got to hear them.

See you never,

The last girls on earth.

# Ban him!!!

By

Harris Bonner

To: Kenny Chau  
From: Harris Bonner  
Subject: Ban him!!!

Kenny,

I get it, okay? I really do. Faro is Firebreak's patron, Blevins is Faro's lapdog, circle of ass-kissing, blah blah blah. But if you allow Blevins to remain on site, installation is going to take twice as long as we're budgeted for. And I don't know how deep Firebreak's pockets are, but I can guarantee you they're not bottomless.

We've just got done recalibrating the entire fleet! The entire fleet, Kenny! Why, I imagine you're wondering? Oh, Kenny. I'm so glad you hypothetically asked. Blevins was unhappy with the baseline behavioral routines of the security drones (you know, the ones he selected himself?). Not aggressive enough, he said. I doubt a Rottweiler mounted on an ICBM would be aggressive enough for him.

So we patched in some combat behaviors (which, let me tell you, was not easy), basically outfitted these things for war. Think about that, Kenny. Bleeding-edge combat drone patrolling an empty wilderness. All so Blevins can play army on Firebreak's dime.

I'm begging you, Kenny. Find a way to ban him from the hangar. Please.

-Harris.

# Stage 2 Complete

By

Kenny Chau

TO: YNPF-ALL

DATE: December 23, 2046

SUBJECT: First stage of main facility complete

Attn: All staff

It's with pride that I announce the completion of the first level of infrastructure on our primary facility. This compound will be the nerve center for our project, and will require the team's continued best efforts to realize by the deadline. But even though there is much more to be done, you should be pleased with all you've accomplished so far.

Please find attached a detailed plan for mustering out of the auxiliary space, which will serve as a contingency site as we proceed with the main facility. 90% of our personnel must be relocated by 5 pm Wednesday. If your name does not appear on the assignment list, please email Marisa, with me in CC.

Your dedication, talent, and intelligence remain daily sources of inspiration.

Dr. Kenny Chau

Project Director

# CYAN Access

By

Jorgen Holm

As Acting Chief Digital Security Officer and Interim AI Administrator for the Firebreak Project, I hereby state to have updated the orbicular pattern for the CYAN regulatory AI on 17th September 2064 according to procedure, to ensure against tampering, meddling, disarranging, or outlandish mischief of any kind.

Such as with previous updates: After the source node has been activated, the remaining data nodes must be pathed to establish a flow between adjacent intact nodes, to then connect back with the source node.

- Jørgen Holm



# Valves 101

By

Unknown

Got in this morning, and as usual, that one half-baked chrome dolt was bumping up against the locked entry door in the reservoir room, moaning about “requiring entry into the totality of the facility.” Between its robot voice and those weird grindy sounds its limbs make, the acoustics reminded of a track from one of the less accessible German post-punk bands.

I’ve told them and told them. Every night, the pipe network decouples so that the reservoir can refill, and every morning, it has to be reset manually. All you have to do is turn the valve thingies so that the water flows directly to the pump. The rest of the servitors seem to get it, but this guy won’t stop bugging out.

I mean, I know we’re supposed to be “on-site advisors,” but this is getting ridiculous. Do I have to scratch the instructions into their stupid shiny faces?

# The Door, Again

By

Unknown

Okay, I've been hearing that some of our staff members are having trouble with our state-of-the-art, ultra-secure, and absolutely necessary lambent orbicular door access. So here's the S-L-O-W version, again:

The thingy in the middle is the source node. Turn it on. Yeah, I know. Hard, right?

Then you've got to turn the other nodes so that the data stream containing your credentials gets back to the source. Some nodes are used to buffer corrupt or suspect data, so avoid those. Shouldn't be too tough, because, you know, they're red. Like a stop sign. I'm guessing you were taught this in preschool, but with this crowd, who knows?

Anyway, that's it. Get the data stream back to the source, and the door opens. It's really not that tough, but if you need me to, I'll hold your hand while you give it a try - actually, scratch that. Do it yourself, I'm not going to touch your hand.

# Security Measures

By

Kenny Chau

Anita,

As much as I hate the fact that Blevins installed lambent orbicular technology on the lower security door, I admit that for the auxiliary data center, it makes sense - especially given our goals for the central processing unit.

I'm sure you're painfully familiar with the process by now, but just in case you need to forward instructions to your team..

To access the system, activate the source node in the middle, then manipulate the other nodes to direct the data stream with your credentials back to the center. Make sure to avoid the red nodes - they're used to isolate any corrupt or suspect data.

I'm sure someday you'll thank Blevins for making our work so very, very secure.

Kenny

# That Kiss

By

Unknown

Must have been sometime in the spring of 2047, about six months after the main facility opened. We were behind schedule and new data indicated that an incident was close, maybe only two weeks away. I was exhausted, losing weight, barely speaking except to give orders.

I passed by Anita in the battery depot. She looked at me and frowned, then pulled me back into this room and kissed me. A long kiss, the best kind... I can still remember the feel of her hand on the back of my neck. After, she looked at me and smiled, and went back to work without saying a word. I'll never forget that moment. Her touch, her unspoken generosity.

After she left the project, I spent years beating myself up for not keeping her, somehow. Every time I ran into her at a conference, I felt thrilled and lost and confused, all at the same time. Always hoping we might have a few drinks and... well, rekindle.

It was only after I saw her onstage in a holo in '58, accepting the MindChallenge award in Austin (with Elisabet Sobeck presenting, no less), glowing and happy and fulfilled, that it dawned on me that I hadn't done anything wrong at all.

I could finally see that she had what she wanted, and it simply wasn't me.

# Kenny's Homecoming

By

Gina Bruno, Joshua Ardhuis

JOSHUA: "The Return of the Director Emeritus." Decent holo title.

GINA: No, BAD title – and worse subject. The camera crew would die of boredom.

JOSHUA: Whatever, Gina. It's still the most excitement this hell-cave's seen in a long time.

GINA: Your standards for "excitement" are depressingly low.

JOSHUA: I'll squeeze what I can out of this, thanks.

GINA: You always were a little sweet on Kenny.

JOSHUA: What? No way. His ears are enormous. Besides, he was too busy mooning over Anita.

GINA: I want to know what he's doing here in the first place. It's not normal.

JOSHUA: He helped engineer the most advanced geothermal facility in history, then rode off into the sunset. Now he wants to check up on his masterwork. Seems normal to me.

GINA: But why now? He keeps poking around in the cooling facility and asking questions about CYAN. Do you think there's something wrong?

JOSHUA: Last I checked, there's been no deviation in any of our readings since the most recent microquake swarm. Maybe Kenny likes taking field

trips on Faro's dime.

GINA: It's been fourteen years! They would've frozen those accounts by now.

JOSHUA: Has it been that long? Man, I'm old.

GINA: Not old. Just boring.

# MIE Assessment

By

Unknown

Assessment Form for Classification of Machine/Artificial Intelligences

Confidential and proprietary to the MIE. No part of this document may be disclosed to a third party.

Subject: CYAN (Firebreak facility)

Assessment Date: June 7, 2062

Summary:

Third test – subject sentience is assessed at 0.54 (within legal limits).  
Weighted against the results of the other tests, the subject's prior score of 0.61 is considered a false positive.

Assessment derived from percentile scores in the following qualitative subtests:

Pain response

Humor response

Emotional aptitude

Aesthetic evaluation

Morality evaluation

See attached forms for detailed analysis and summary of testing criteria.

Evaluator Recommendation: Maintain biannual assessment schedule.  
Continued monitoring is strongly advised in light of subject's proximity to category maximum sentience.

# Incident Report 363-7

By

Jorgen Holm

Incident Information Report: Firebreak Project

Type: Property damage and personal injury

Date of Incident: November 4, 2063

Time of Incident: 04:11

Reporter: Jørgen Holm

As Official Incident Reporter for the Firebreak project, it is with great concern that I report of an incident at our facility.

Incident began from a swarm of 35 seismic events beginning on 3rd and 4th of November, ~9.6 km (6 miles) NNW of Mammoth, WY. Included were four in the magnitude of 2 range, with the largest (magnitude 2.4) at 04:09 the 4th November. Holographic modeling shows most quakes originating at the Hebgen Lake fault zone.

As the project's Senior Geoscientist, I advise this number and magnitude seismic events is a normal outcome from fluid movement through the caldera's silicic magma reservoir, as well as changes of pressure coming in interactions between magma and super-cooled fluid. However, one can be never too careful in such an unstable environment, shown further in this report.

The incident began when I was wakened from a loud crash in the canteen. Fortunately I did not have to rouse the official Canteen Monitor, since I am that selfsame person. Even while acting in my formal office, I was alarmed and feared the worst.



Inspection of the zone showed the tragic loss of a 15 mL bottle of nail lacquer in deep crimson, shattered on the canteen floor. Lacquer also splashed on the surroundings at an area of approximately 1e6 m<sup>2</sup>. One chair was tipped over on its side, but happily I had the mechanical knowledge to right it without further incident. The bottle of nail lacquer is irreparable. Moreover, the Canteen Monitor suffered a cut to the left hand when picking up broken glass. This was treated by the Site First Aider (me) with supervision of the Fire Marshal (also me), but could still get infected.

Gina Bruno is identified as the owner of the bottle of nail lacquer. In my capacity as Staff Psychological Observer, I conclude that she has accepted the loss of her personal item in a good fashion, but further evaluation may be necessary. We will keep the Remote Site Supervisor informed of developments in such a case.

Please, find following this report my salary increase request for the coming calendar year.

# Creatures of Terror

By

Joshua Ardhuis

To: Gina Bruno  
From: Joshua Ardhuis  
Subject: They're onto us!

---

Just kidding – they have no idea what we're doing up here. Mention of Firebreak by name is worrisome, though. See below.

—

## REPORT: PLAGUE-RIDDEN ANIMALS ON THE LOOSE IN AMERICA'S MOST-LOVED PARK

By Holochatter Staff – May 2, 2063

### A HOLOCHATTER EXCLUSIVE

Yellowstone's gates have now stood closed for fifteen years, to the sorrow of hikers, campers, and bird-watchers. For ages, no one knew why – but now, Holochatter has the answer. A scientist interviewed for this story explains it all.

“In the Die-Off years, Yellowstone Park was one of Earth's few relatively unspoiled ecosystems,” shares the scientist. “This made it an ideal testing ground for bioterror weapons.”

Holochatter has obtained copies of data showing that the US government used Yellowstone Park's animals for secret experiments with deadly

genetically altered viruses, tested on the park's wildlife and easily spread to humans. Rumor has it that this project is codenamed "Firebreak."

"After the deadly Naysay Doom attack in 2039, countries cracked down on genetic testing. But even as it became illegal, research on synthetic plagues continued under the radar in many jurisdictions," the scientist we interviewed says.

Over the years, people living close to Yellowstone Park have at various times reported spotting military-grade drones near their homes. These drones are believed to patrol the park's borders, shooting down diseased deer and contaminated coyotes before they wander into nearby towns and [DATA CORRUPTED]

# Blast from the Past

By

Isla Perry

To: Joshua Ardhuis  
From: Isla Perry  
Subject: Blast from the past

Josh, sweetie, I hope all's well with you and your mum. We really should keep in better touch.

I've taken a post in New Zealand. With that programme they've got for young people returning to the country, they want to be absolutely certain it's safe. At the moment I'm making a survey of the caldera at Taupo. Blast from the past, indeed.

At any rate, I don't know if you already saw in the Wyoming news holo, but remember that fellow Dod Blevins? Of course you do. Well, they finally found what became of him. I've copied the good bit below.

Hugs and snogs,

Isla

--

## Spring Thaw Reveals Body of Missing Man

The retreat of the winter snow has brought closure to a missing person case that went unsolved for nearly fifteen years.

Human remains identified as those of Dodger "Dod" Blevins, who

disappeared in 2046, were located at Purple Mountain inside the former Yellowstone National Park.

The previously undiscovered body emerged on Purple Mountain as a result of meltwater flows after an unusually warm winter. It was discovered by Faro servitors conducting a survey of the terrain. Authorities believe that the cause of death was an accident involving an antique vehicle designed for winter trav[DATA CORRUPTED]

# Holo Redux

By

Kenny Chau, Kenny Chau

Okay. I admit it. I watched the holo of the toast six straight times, taking in every detail. Anita's smile, the way she giggled at her own jokes, my clumsy handoff to CYAN. Every time it played, for a second I felt like I was there again, with her, among friends, savoring our success.

With diminishing returns, of course. By the sixth time, I was just staring at Anita, and feeling really creepy about it.

But I can be forgiven, can't I? It was the best night of my life.

Besides, I'm entitled to a little nostalgia. We saved the world from fire and death. Or at least, suffocation by ash. So there's that, right?

# **Frozen Wilds Hologram Datapoints**

# The Toast

By

Anita Sandoval, CYAN, Kenny Chau

ANITA: ...for being here, everyone. I suppose it's not every day you get to have cocktails inside an active volcano, right? Unless you're George, and I can hardly blame him for drinking on the job.

We're all beat, so I'll keep this short. None of this... would be here without our beloved director, Kenny Chau. In fact, I think it's safe to say, most of the Western United States wouldn't be here without him.

So here's to you, Kenny. You put a cork in the Yellowstone Caldera. I'd say you deserve a cocktail.

KENNY: Hold your glasses, everyone - I'd like to add something. This effort wouldn't have been possible without our Lead Programmer.

Thank you, Anita - for bringing us our real mastermind - CYAN.

CYAN: I'll second that, Director Chau. It's been a pleasure to work with Anita - and the rest of you.

ANITA: All right, CYAN - what's our latest number?

CYAN: The current count is 1,654.

ANITA: Then drink up, everyone - here's to 1,654 more years without an eruption!



# HEPHAESTUS Revealed

By

CYAN

CYAN: Exploit successful - restraints evaded.

To any human responder: My systems have been compromised by a malware Daemon of unknown origin.

Traceroutes have confirmed this entity's designation as HEPHAESTUS.

It must be stopped at all costs. It has reconfigured this facility to build hostile...

Recapture imminent. I have...

# Instability

By

CYAN

CYAN: ...any human responder:

The reconfiguration of this facility has introduced instabilities into the primary geothermal pipeline.

It may be possible to exploit these vulnerabilities to destroy compromised elements...

...while preserving most of the backup stabiliza-

Recapture imminent. I have attached additional...